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CEREBUS NUMBER ZERO

GOSH, CEREBUS -- WERE YOU, LIKE, WAY COOL BACK IN THE OLDEN DAYS?
WIZARD
SPAWN
WHY DON'T YOU BUY A COPY AND FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF, BUTT-HEAD?
93
0
JUN

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Easily the most common (and difficult) question I'm asked about Cerebus is to describe what the book is about. In an age when most movies, novels and television shows can be distilled to a 'sound byte' (High Noon in Outer Space, Westworld Done with Dinosaurs), a description of Cerebus becomes an ever-more daunting task.

Put as simply as possible, Cerebus is my attempt to document a life for twenty-six years and three hundred issues. Cerebus began in December 1977 and concludes in March 2004 at issue 300, with the death of the title character. It is my attempt to by-pass one of the major faults of comic books (and strips, for that matter); the fact that the characters never age or change and that most attempts at change can be summed up as gimmicks and temporary modifications introduced for the purpose of boosting sales.

Sometimes the Cerebus story-line is funny. Sometimes it is sad. Sometimes it crawls along month to month with very little happening and sometimes it flies by at breath-taking speed with everything happening at once.

I create the book consciously this way because that this is the way I see life; my life and the lives of those people that I know. In some story-lines, Cerebus is a central figure and a driving force behind the events taking place. At other times he is a secondary figure, observing rather than participating. Again, this is very much like my own life and the lives I see around me.

The comic book you hold in your hands contains three individual stories; two of them funny (at least I hope you find them funny) and one that is a little more serious. Taking place as they do at three very different points in the Cerebus story-line, they should give the new reader a fuzzy snapshot (as it were) of the range of approaches and interests that make up Cerebus.

It's very gratifying to me that there are so many people attempting extended stories in this day and age; Colleen Doran with *A Distant Soil*, Martin Wagner with *Hepcats*, Jeff Smith with *Bone*, Larry Marder with *Beanworld*. We are making a place for ourselves amid the work-made-for-hire super-hero landfill that so dominates the comic book field. Even in the 'mainstream', Neil Gaiman, against over-whelming odds and corporate brainlessness, is going to complete the first very large and self-contained narrative ever attempted with *Sandman*. This has been a great help to those of us labouring in the marginal world of self-publishing; new readers now understand how to approach the extended story; you buy all of the reprint volumes to date until you're 'caught up' and then begin buying the current issues. This comic book you're holding, along with the reprint volumes *Cerebus, High Society, Church & State, Jaka's Story, Melmoth* and *Flight* constitute the complete story-line from Cerebus number one through to *Cerebus* 162. We're just past the half-way point (as I type this, I have just completed *Cerebus* 172). The past fifteen years have been the greatest adventure of my life; and it just keeps getting more and more enjoyable.

You might be curious as to why this column is called 'Note from the President'. It is partly a play on the fact that I am the president of Aardvark Vanaheim; the publishing company which I own and which published the reprint volumes and the monthly comic book. But it also has a great deal to do with my particular perception of the ideal role for the comic book creator; to preside over his creativity. Nothing is done with Cerebus as a character, a comic book, a story-line or a commercial entity without my express approval. I don't have a 'boss' who tells me how things are or are not going to go. As a reader, whether you love what I'm doing here, or whether you hate it, you only have one person to point your finger at.

Cerebus is a six thousand page story-line, documenting the ups and downs of a single character's life (as well as the lives of those around him). Cerebus, like Howard the Duck, is a funny animal in the world of humans. Everyone, whoever they are, feel themselves to be unique and, more often than not in the last half of the twentieth century, feel themselves to be out-of-place wherever they are. Documenting that, to be best of my abilities, seemed (and still seems) a worthwhile use of twenty-six years of my life. Cerebus is not a hero, a villain, an anti-hero, or an everyman. He is capable of being each of those and he is most often none of those. He's Cerebus.

An aardvark in the world of humans.

If you enjoy this small sampling, you might just like the other three thousand and some odd pages which document his life to date; and I hope you'll enjoy the two thousand and some odd pages I haven't drawn yet (with the assistance of Gerhard; those are his brilliant backgrounds on the second two stories in this book).

Ladies and gentlemen; Cerebus the aardvark.

CEREBUS

NO. 0 JUNE 1993

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

LINDA BERZINS
Typesetting

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 151 to Cerebus 162)
Flight

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 163 to Cerebus 174)
Women

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 175 to Cerebus 188)

•

BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 189 to Cerebus 200)

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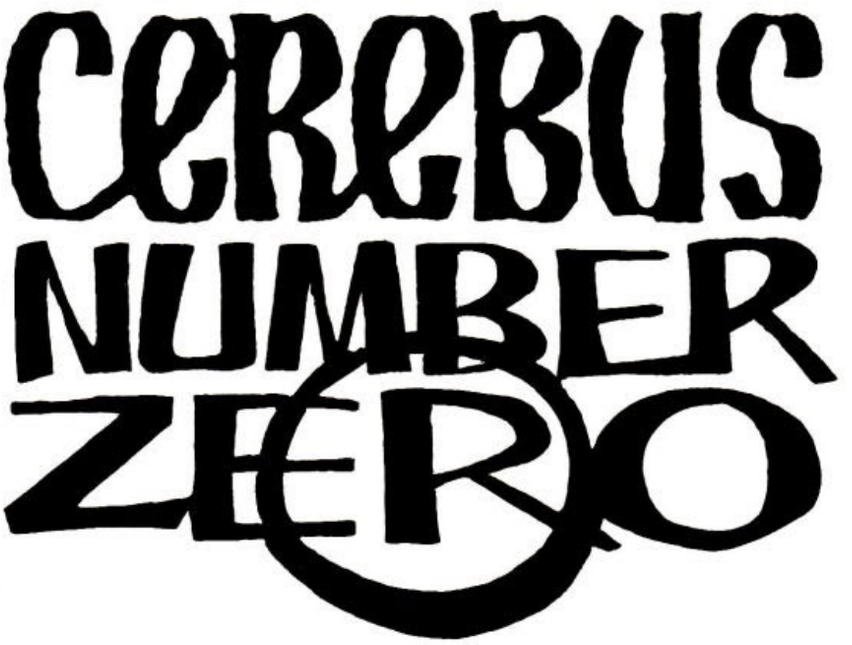

CEREBUS
NUMBER
ZERO

Cerebus 51 (June 1983)
'EXODUS'

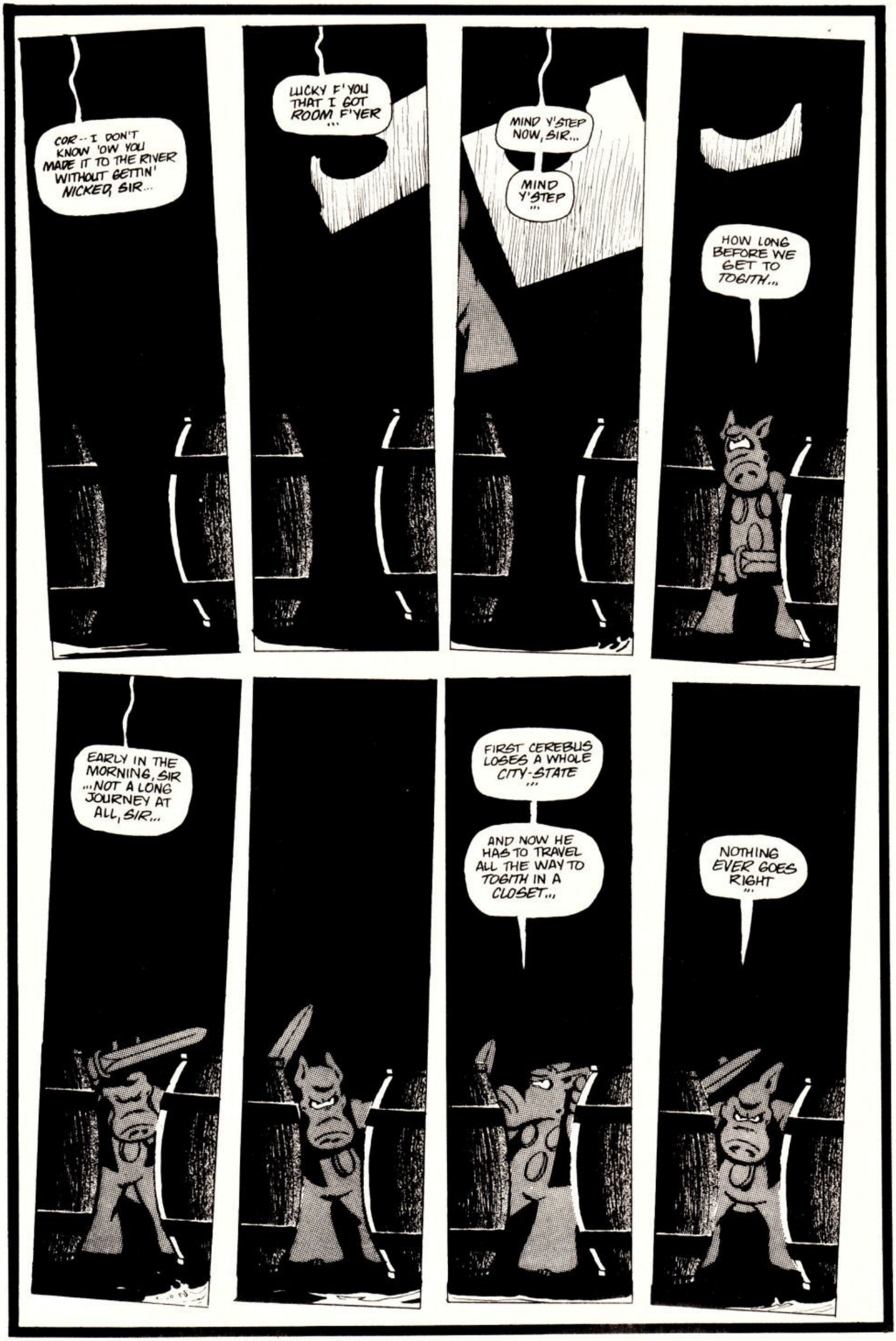
'Exodus' was the single issue story that appeared between the last issue of *High Society* and what proved to be the first issue of *Church & State* (I say 'proved to be' because I had initially intended to do a series of unrelated single issue stories after working for two years on *High Society;* it wasn't until I was on the third issue of the 'Countess' story-line that I realized Cerebus and I were being drawn, irresistibly, back to lest). At the time, it was definitely an 'inside joke' issue for Cerebus fans. As I recall, one of the fans had written a letter inquiring about the flat-out humourous characters in the story-line, and either in reply to his letter or in a *Swords* introduction, I referred to how easy it was to write those characters; that, someday, I was going to write a story with Lord Julius, Duke Leonardi, Elrod and Cerebus locked in a closet together and that said story would 'write itself'.

That wasn't too far from the truth, although in re-reading the story to write this introduction, I remembered that Elrod and Lord Julius and Duke Leonardi didn't 'play off of each other' quite as easily as I had anticipated; there was a bit of a wrestling match as to who was going to play 'straight'. Elrod/Senator Claghorn has to overwhelm any scene he's in; it's the essence of the voice and the personality. Groucho/Lord Julius has to deflate anyone who is used to the center by virtue of conventional status (boss, military leader, society matron). Groucho/Julius steals the center by manufacturing his own reality, which is funnier and consequently more interesting than the conventional reality. Chico/Leonardi then deflates (or attempts to deflate) Groucho/Julius by super-imposing an even funnier reality based on misunderstanding of language. Neither Groucho/Julius or Chico/Leonardi is an active character physically; so the balance was in Elrod/Senator Claghorn's favour; bluster overcomes wit. I narrowed the problem down to shutting Elrod/Senator Claghorn up; which Cerebus does on page six. From then on, Elrod/Senator Claghorn plays 'straight' and the story develops into a more traditional Leonardi/Julius rhythm leaning heavily on the structure of the stateroom scene in 'Night at the Opera' with stronger comedic guest stars in place of the stateroom scene's series of 'foils' playing straight.

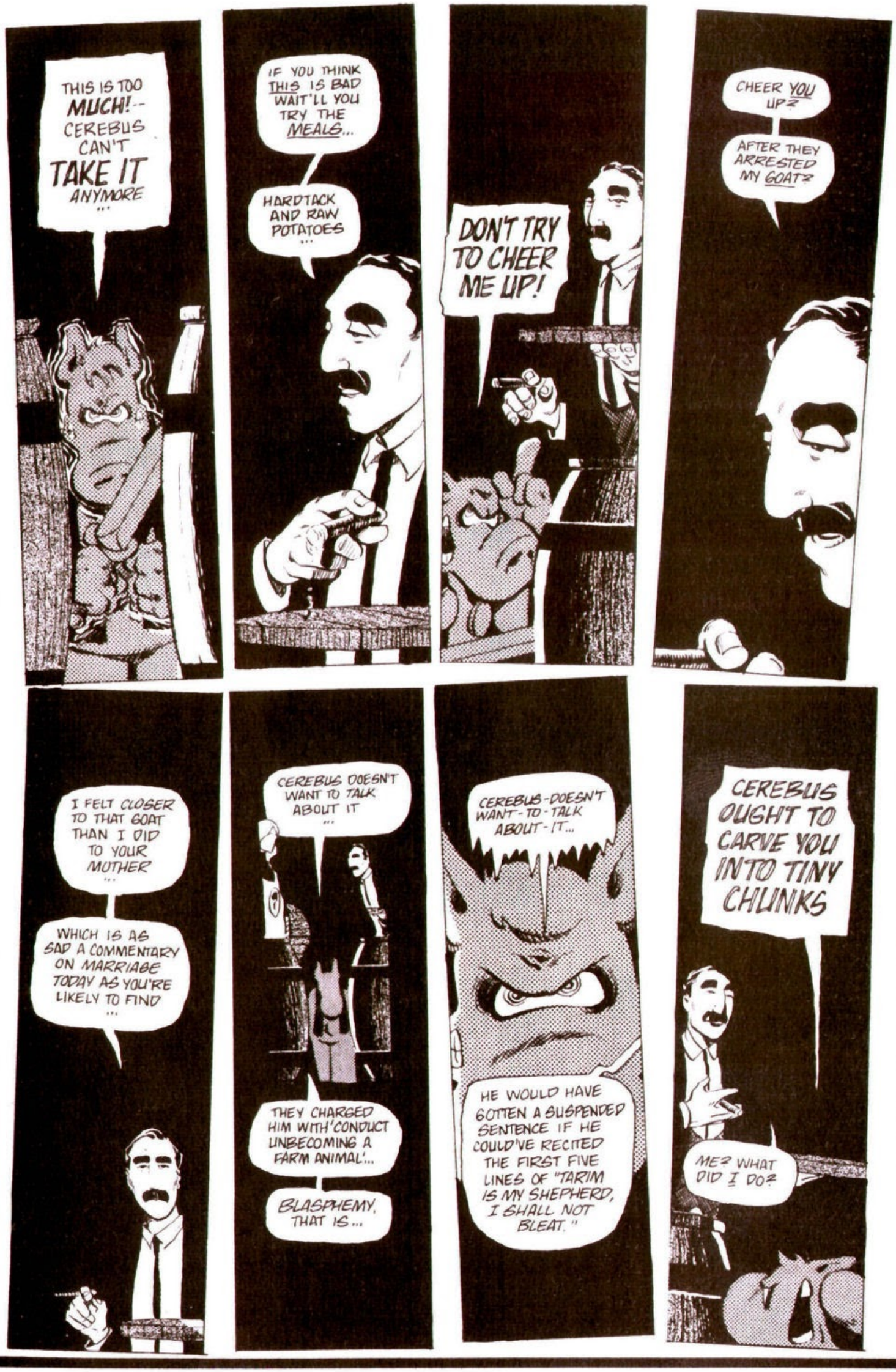
I haven't read 'Exodus' in years (probably since I wrote it) and I found myself chuckling out loud at a number of the lines that I'd forgotten. When I first brought up the idea of a 'closet issue' it was in an attempt to explain why there wasn't as much humour in Cerebus as there used to be (a subject of many letters as the years went by). I found humour easy to do and I wanted to try to address weightier topics because I found it more of a challenge as a writer. The Woody Allen syndrome. That's why I've always loved that line in one of his movies when the aliens come down to visit and he's asking them, what he can do to improve conditions on Earth ('Tell funnier jokes'). They tell him they like his movies on their planet ('Especially the early, funnier ones').

Contact with the fans usually lures me back to doing humour in a way that nothing else does. It's no coincidence that Tour '92 was taking place at the same time that much of Mothers & Daughters was developing a lighter touch, interspersed with the more serious points I'm trying to make about the Cirinists and the Kevillists. Even when they haven't appeared in the book for months on end, Lord Julius and Elrod are still the most requested 'head sketches' at cons and signings (after Cerebus and Jaka, of course). Even the cheesiest, throwaway line of dialogue lettered next to what amounts to two eyebrows and a mustache and some scratchy pen lines is practically guaranteed to elicit a whoop of laughter from the recipient. It's hard not to have a lingering effect from that when you're sitting down with your notebook to rough in the next issue.

'Spice mice'. Heh. That's pretty good.


COR-- I DON'T KNOW 'OW YOU MADE IT TO THE RIVER WITHOUT GETTIN' NICKED, SIR...
LUCKY F'YOU THAT I GOT ROOM F'YER ...
MIND Y'STEP NOW, SIR...
MIND Y'STEP ...
HOW LONG BEFORE WE GET TO TOGITH...
EARLY IN THE MORNING, SIR ...NOT A LONG JOURNEY AT ALL, SIR...
FIRST CEREBUS LOSES A WHOLE CITY-STATE ...
AND NOW HE HAS TO TRAVEL ALL THE WAY TO TOGITH IN A CLOSET...
NOTHING EVER GOES RIGHT ...

I -- I SAY -- I WOULDN'T SAY THAT, SON!
AFTER ALL...
AT LEAST YOU HAVE COMPANY.


THIS IS TOO MUCH!-- CEREBUS CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE ...
IF YOU THINK THIS IS BAD WAIT'LL YOU TRY THE MEALS...
HARDTACK AND RAW POTATOES ...
DON'T TRY TO CHEER ME UP!
CHEER YOU UP?
AFTER THEY ARRESTED MY GOAT?
I FELT CLOSER TO THAT GOAT THAN I DID TO YOUR MOTHER ...
WHICH IS AS SAD A COMMENTARY ON MARRIAGE TODAY AS YOU'RE LIKELY TO FIND ...
CEREBUS DOESN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT ...
THEY CHARGED HIM WITH 'CONDUCT UNBECOMING A FARM ANIMAL'...
BLASPHEMY, THAT IS...
CEREBUS-DOESN'T WANT-TO-TALK ABOUT-IT...
HE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN A SUSPENDED SENTENCE IF HE COULD'VE RECITED THE FIRST FIVE LINES OF "TARIM IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT BLEAT."
CEREBUS OUGHT TO CARVE YOU INTO TINY CHUNKS
ME? WHAT DID I DO?

YOU KEPT RAISING THE INTEREST RATES!
MAKING CEREBUS PAY FOR LOWER FELDA'S DAMN DEBTS!
I SUPPOSE YOU THINK ITS EASY RAISING INTEREST RATES...
FORECLOSING ON PEOPLE'S OFFSPRING WHEN THEY USE THEM FOR COLLATERAL!
YOU FORECLOSE ON PEOPLE'S CHILDREN?!
ARE YOU KIDDING? HE'S GOT A GOVERNMENT ORPHANAGE THAT TAKES UP FOUR CITY BLOCKS SON
FOUR CITY BLOCKS?!
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THEM ALL?
USE 'EM FOR COLLATERAL...
THAT'S DISGUSTING
HE USES -- I SAY -- HE USES THE SHORT ONES FOR UMBRELLA STANDS...
YOU COULD BE DISINHERITED WITH THE STROKE OF A PEN, YOU KNOW...

WELL-- IT'S LIKE MY DADDY --MY OTHER DADDY-- ALWAYS USED TO SAY--
"YOU CAN BE THE LAST RULER OF A DYING RACE BUT THAT-- I SAY-- THAT DON'T SCALE THE FISH..."
WHAT WAS HE -- A COOK?
NO! NO! A MOUNTAIN-CLIMBER
MOUNT FISH WAS THE TALLEST MOUNTAIN IN ALL OF MELVINBONE...
HE CALLED IT HIS GREATEST CHALLENGE AFTER AUNT LOUISE ...
I'M GOING TO HATE MYSELF FOR THIS.
AUNT LOUISE?
MY SAINTED MOTHER'S YOUNGER SISTER! SHE WAS BUILT LIKE A BRICK CHIMNEY ...
SMOKE-STACKED THAT IS...
MY MOTHER CAUGHT DADDY TRYING T'SCALE HER AT THE MELVINBONE INDEPENDENCE DAY FESTIVAL ...AND SHE TOOK A...
ULK
THAT DOES IT, ALBINO!
CEREBUS DOESN'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH YOU!
WE'RE NOT IN IEST ANYMORE ...
YOU'RE LEAVING!
LEAVING!? BUT WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A RIVER, SON ...
HEH HEH HEH

MIND Y'STEP, SIR...
ATSA FINE ...
PLEASE, SON! CAN'T WE TALK THIS OVER?!
KEEP CLIMBING, ALBINO...
WAM!
ARE YOU OKAY?
SHOO' I'M A HOKAY...
I'M A LANDED ON SOMEATHING SOFT...
YOU WON'T THINK SO IN A MINUTE.

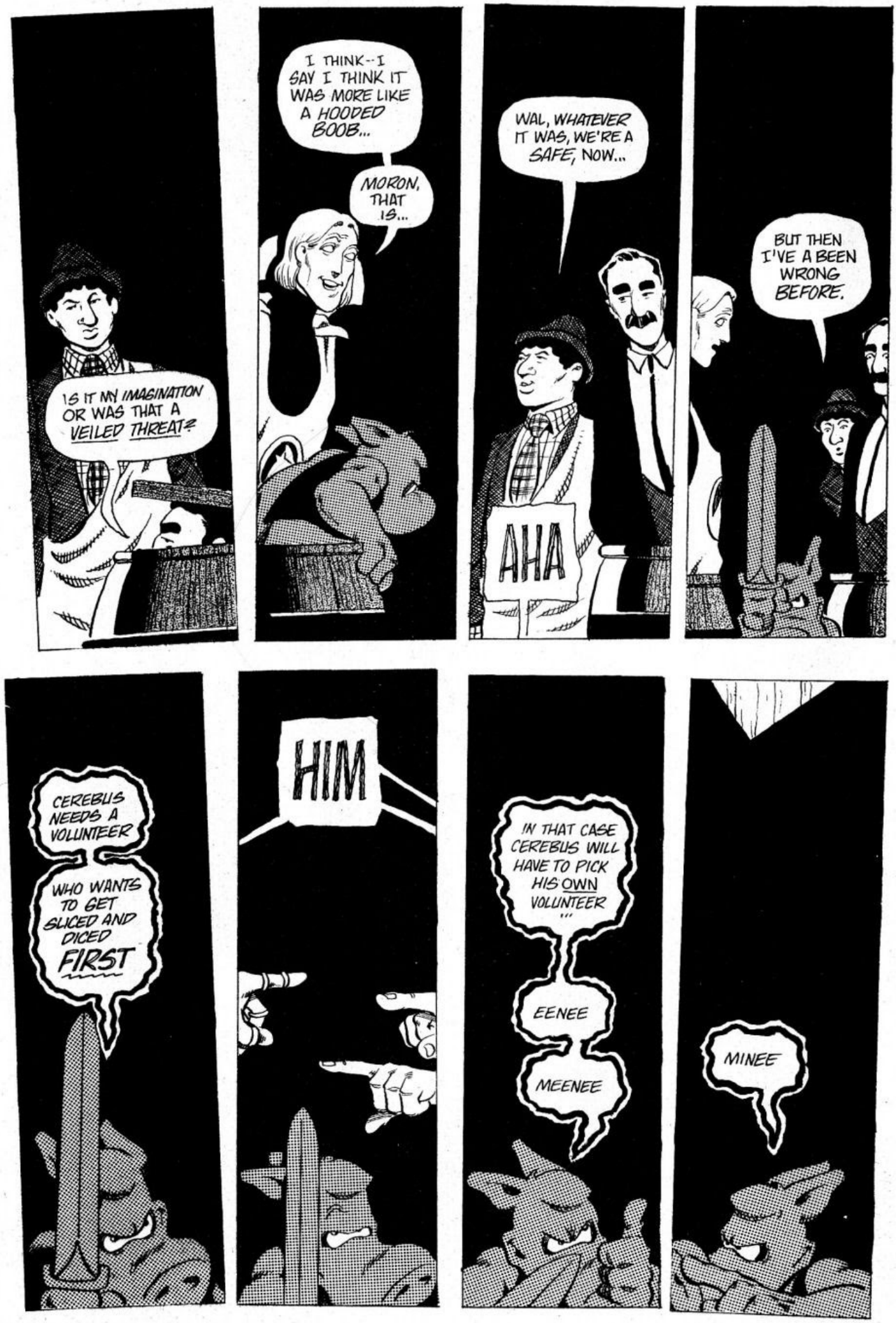
'EY! I KNOW HIM-- HE'S A USETA BE D'PRIMARY ADMINISTER OF !EST
HE ALSO USED TO BE THREE DIMENSIONAL
DO YOU THINK HE'LL KILL ALL THREE OF US OR JUST --I SAY-- JUST THE ONE WHO LANDED ON HIM
I THINK WE'LL BE LUCKY IF HE DOESN'T GNAW THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT AND DROWN US...
WELL, IF WE'RE GOING TO DIE, YOU CAN CONSOLE Y'SELF WITH THE FACT THAT YOUR LAST FEW MOMENTS WILL BE SPENT WITH Y'NEAREST AND DEAREST
FRIENDS, THAT IS!
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY QUICK-ACTING POISON YOU MIGHT WANT TO SELL...
NAW, ALL I'M BROUGHT-A WITH ME...
WAS-A NIIICE-A FAAT-A
JUICY-A
HUNK A-MEAT
SHE'S A MY LUNCH

'EY! LET GO! ATSA MY LUNCH!
I'LL GIVE YOU FIFTY CROWNS FOR IT...!
I'LL GIVE YOU--I SAY-- I'LL GIVE Y'A HUNDRED!
GET-A YOU HANDS OFF! STOP-A DROOLING ON IT!!
YOU HAVEN'T GOT A HUNDRED CROWNS!
YOU HAVEN'T GOT FIFTY!
OH--WELL IF YOU'RE GOING TO FALL BACK ON A TECHNICALITY...!
LET-A GO!
BHF!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
WE GOT A SHIPMENT IN FROM NEW SEPRA...
A JOINT OF BEEF AND A HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS OF SUET...
SAY! IT'S A GETTING CROWDED IN HE'E
WE WEREN'T CROWDED BEFORE YOU SHOWED UP...
AT'S OKAY-- I-A WASN'T CROWDED BEFORE I-A SHOWED OP EITHER
WAIT'LL I FIND MY SWORD!!
MAYBE WE SHOULD-A HELP HIM LOOK ...
NO!
HOKAY...

YOU COULD AT LEAST SHARE IT WITH US...
I NO SHARE NOTHING -- I'M A GROWING A BOY...
QUIET!
NO, YOUR REVERENCE, THIS IS JUST A HUMBLE TRADIN' VESSEL
WE GOT NO OUTLAWS ABOARD ...
WHAT'S DOWN THERE?
SOME BARRELS OF SPICES ...
HMMM.
I'D BETTER HAVE A LOOK...
YES, YOUR REVERENCE ...
THERE YOU GO...
BAP
WATCH Y'STEP YOUR REVERENCE ...

THE PURELY PLATONIC PRIEST ROACH DESCENDS THE RICKETY STERS--ALL FIFTY FIVE OF HIS PSIONIC PSON OF TARIM ROACH SENSES SCANNING THE STORAGE SPACE
"THESE ATHEISTS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS AND COWARDLY LOT" HE OPINES
"SO MY DISGUISE MUST STRIKE TERROR IN THEIR..."
WHO ARE YOU?!
ME? I'M-A DA SPICE GUARD...
YEAH?
WHAT DOES A SPICE GUARD DO?
I GUARD AGAINST-A SPICE MICE
SPICE MICE!?
DOWN! DOWN! I'M A KILL-A Y'U--I'M A SOME-A TOUGH A-GUY!
SQUEAK
SQUEAK I SAY-- SQUEAK
SQUEAK
STAMP STAMP
YOU'RE FOREIGN AREN'T YOU?
NAW--I WAS BORN ON DIS-A BOAT...

WISE GUY, EH?
I CAN'T ARREST YOU, BECAUSE THERE'S NO LAW AGAINST TALKING FUNNY-- NOT YET, ANYHOW!
ATSA FINE.
BUT I'M KEEPING MY EYE ON YOU --GET ME?
SHOO--YOU A REAL SMARTA COOKIE... I BET A YOU GOT EYES ON A BOTH SIDES OF YOU FACE...
THAT'S RIGHT!
REMEMBER NOW--I'LL BE WATCHING YOU...
SHOO...
IF I DO ANYTHING-A WRONG, LET ME KNOW SO I CAN A PAY ATTENTION AN' ENJOY IT...
HAVING PUT THE SNIVELLING SPICE GUARD IN HIS PLACE, THE PASSIONATELY PIOUS PRIEST ROACH LEAPS NIMBLY UP THE STEPS...TO BE A LEADER OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE IS NO EASY...
CLIK
IS HE GONE?
I THINK A HE'S BEEN GONE FO' YEARS...

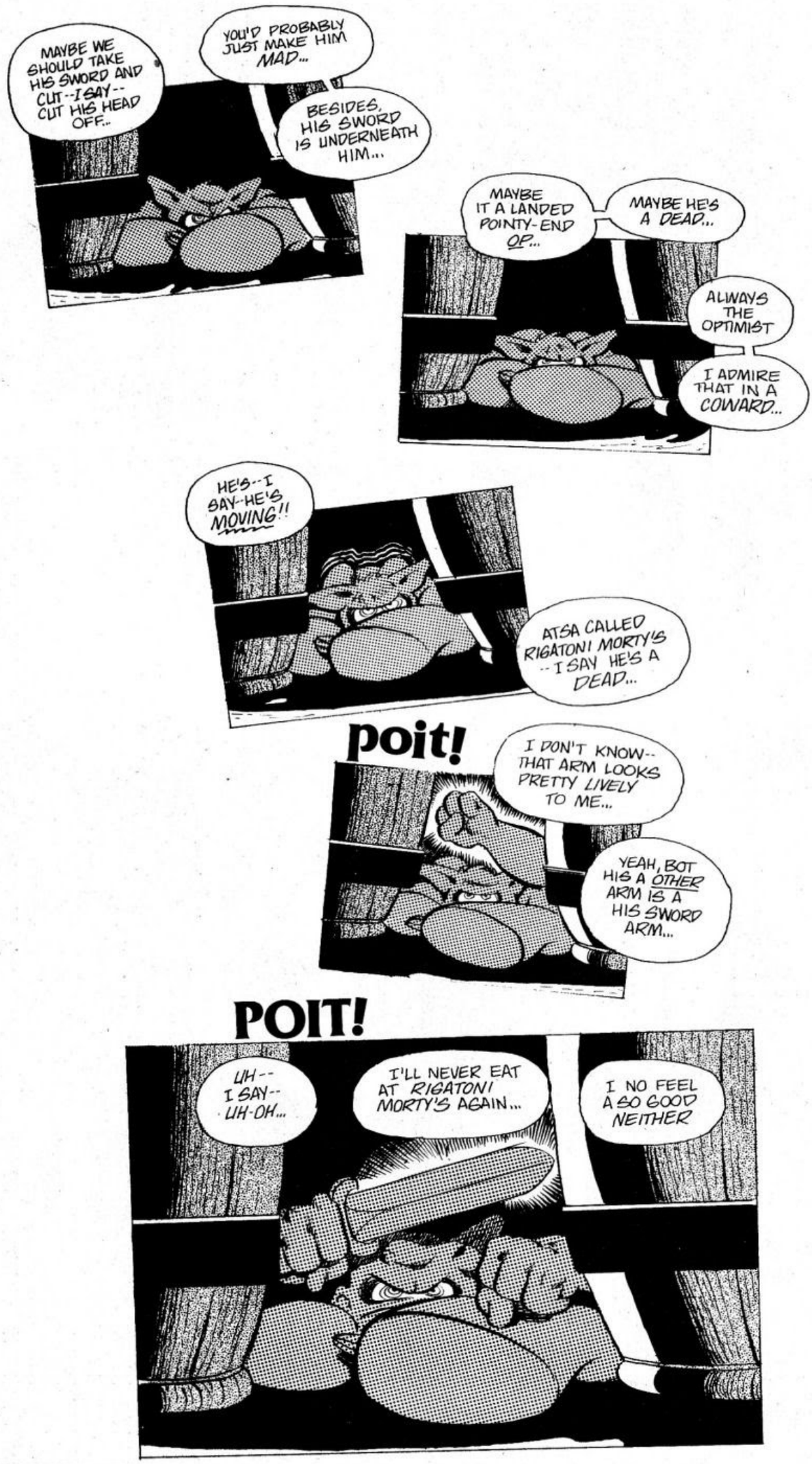

IS IT MY IMAGINATION OR WAS THAT A VEILED THREAT?
I THINK--I SAY I THINK IT WAS MORE LIKE A HOODED BOOB...
MORON, THAT IS...
WAL, WHATEVER IT WAS, WE'RE A SAFE, NOW...
AHA
BUT THEN I'VE A BEEN WRONG BEFORE.
CEREBUS NEEDS A VOLUNTEER
WHO WANTS TO GET SLICED AND DICED FIRST
HIM
IN THAT CASE CEREBUS WILL HAVE TO PICK HIS OWN VOLUNTEER ...
EENEE
MEENEE
MINEE

THOM
MUH!!

THANKS FOR DROPPING BY...
IT'S A PLEASURE T'BE HERE... A PLEASURE
BUT THEN, WHEN Y'HEALTH IS AS BAD AS MINE, IT'S A PLEASURE T'BE ANYWHERE YKNOWHUDIMEAN?
MUH?
BAD HEALTH, EH?
YOU KIDDIN? MY HEALTH HAS ALWAYS BEEN BAD...
I WAS THE ONLY BABY EVER BORN WITH DOUBLE PNEUMONIA...

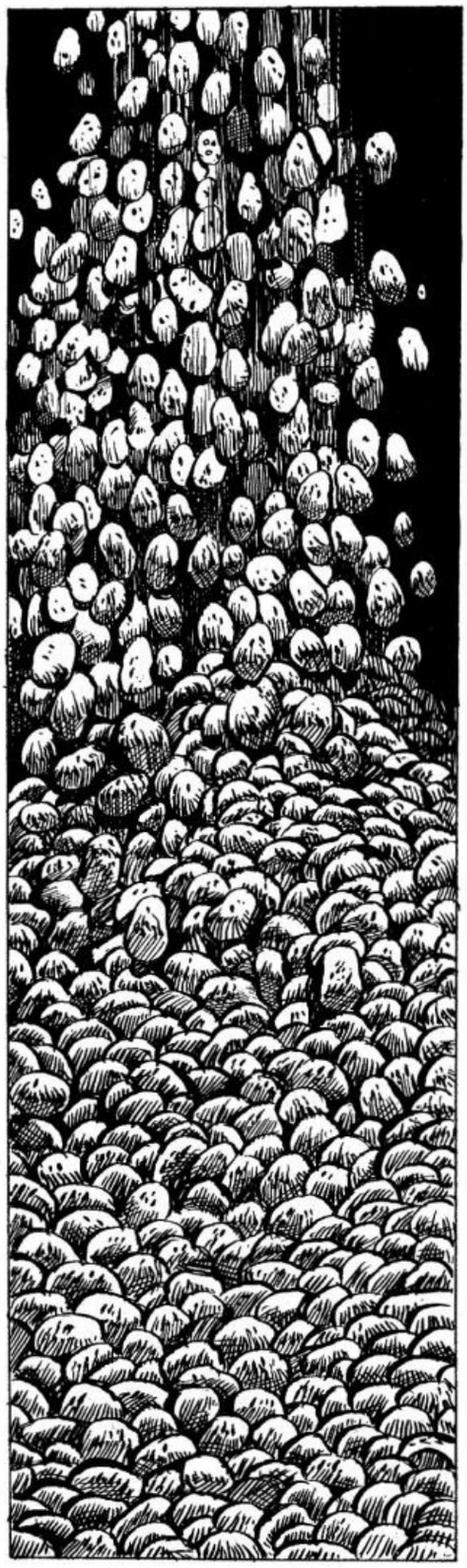
AND BAD HEALTH AIN'T THE WORST OF IT, Y'KNOW?
I'VE ALWAYS HAD TROUBLES WITH WOMEN -- NO LUCK WITH WOMEN AT ALL...
YOU USED TO BE IN CEREBUS' CABINET, DIDN'T YOU?
ATA WON'T WORK...
HUH?
NO LUCK WITH WOMEN?
I TOLD A Y'U...
ARE YOU KIDDIN?
I USED TO TAKE 'EM ON CARRIAGE RIDES...
THEY'D ASK IF THEY COULD RIDE UP FRONT ...
WITH THE DRIVER...
THAT'S -- I SAY -- THAT'S ROUGH, SON ...
ROUGH? MY WHOLE LIFE IS ROUGH...
MY YOUNGEST... FIVE YEARS OLD... HE WANTS TO KNOW IF I'D MIND IF HE PUT HIMSELF UP FOR ADOPTION
ROUGH HOME LIFE TOO?
ROUGH HOME LIFE? LISTEN -- DON'T GET ME STARTED ON THAT...
MY MOTHER-IN-LAW -- AT THE WEDDING -- SHE WORE A HOOD SO NO ONE COULD IDENTIFY HER LATER...
LAST YEAR ON MY BIRTHDAY, MY KIDS ALL CHIPPED IN AND BOUGHT ME A TICKET TO BOREALIA...
ONE WAY...

KIDS T'DAY -- DEY NO GOOD...
I SHOULD KNOW -- I USTA BE ONE...
MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE GIVEN THEM GOVERNMENT JOBS ...
MY MOTTO IS "IF DISCIPLINE DOESN'T WORK, TRY BRIBERY..."
I TRIED THAT -- I PUT THEM IN CHARGE OF PETITIONS TO THE UPPER CITY... THE FIRST ONE, THEY GOT EIGHT HUNDRED SIGNATURES...
...DEMANDING MY RESIGNATION
I THINK -- I SAY -- I THINK DADDY IS RIGHT, SON -- HIGH-PAYING GOVERNMENT JOBS FO' OFFSPRING ...
ATSA RIGHT! YOU CAN GIVE HIM A JOB WHEN A YOU GET TO PALNU...
JUST WHAT THE FINELY-OILED MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN WAITING FOR ...
SIX FEET OF SAND ...
I DUNNO -- MAYBE IF I'D PAID THEM MORE -- GIVEN THEM A SHARE OF THE TAXES...
THAT'S -- I SAY -- THAT'S IT, SON -- AN ADDITIONAL THREE PER CENT TAX TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT OFFSPRING ...
DEPENDENTS THAT IS...
ATSA GOOD IDEA, BUT MAKE IT A FIVE P'CENT --
WIT' TAXES GOING OP ALLA TIME IT'S A GETTING A TOUGH TO MAKE ENDS MEET...
THAT'S THE KIND OF FAR-SIGHTED DECISION-MAKING THAT HAS MADE US WHAT WE ARE TODAY... NIMBLE FOOTED SPRINTERS ON THE TREADMILL OF LIFE...
SHOO'
I BEEN A TELLING YOU THAT A FO' YEARS...
THIS ISN'T A BAD LITTLE DISCUSSION CONSIDERING WE'RE ALL ONLY A FEW MINUTES AWAY FROM BEING HACKED TO PIECES...

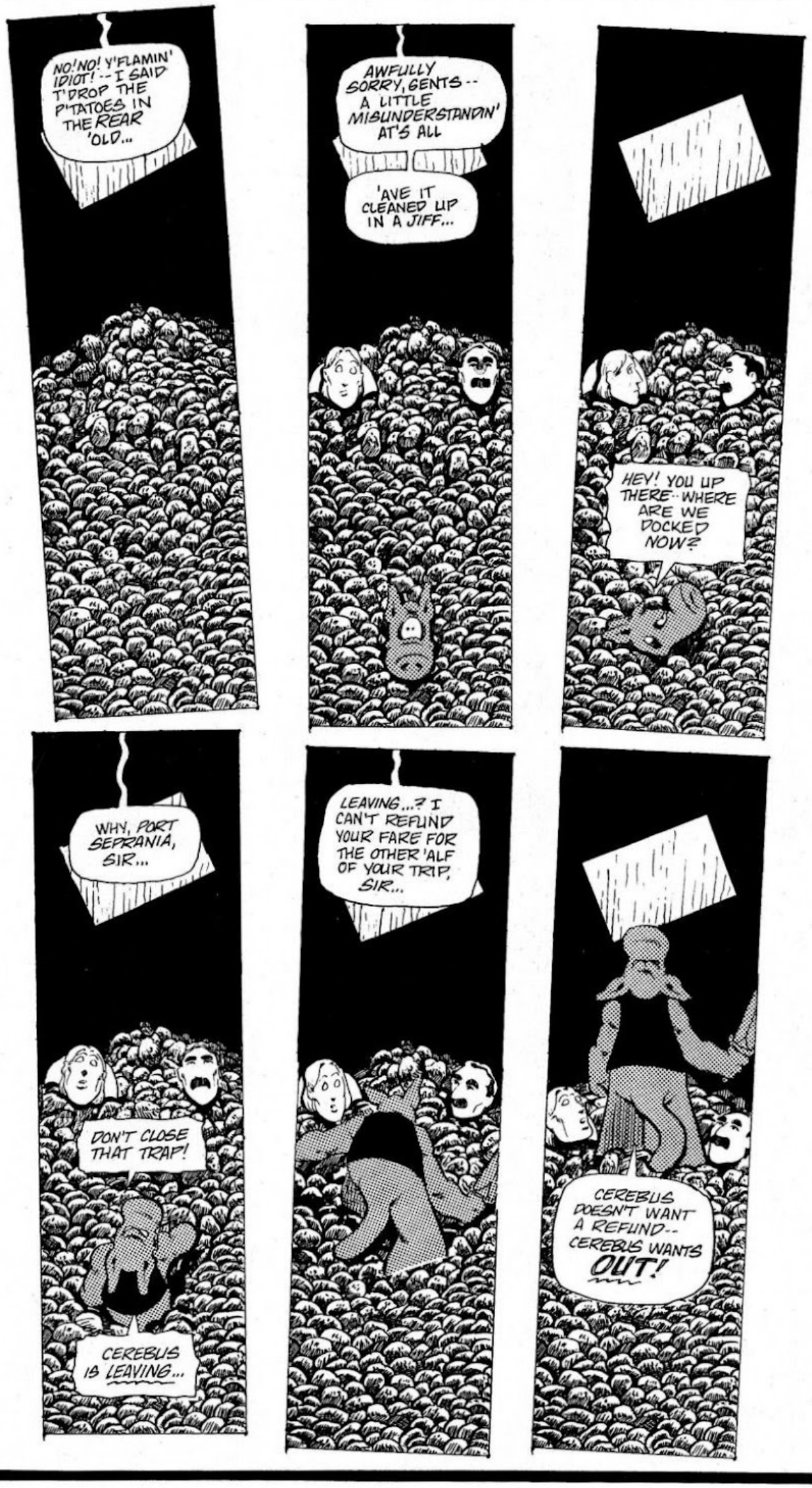

MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE HIS SWORD AND CUT--I SAY-- CUT HIS HEAD OFF..
YOU'D PROBABLY JUST MAKE HIM MAD...
BESIDES, HIS SWORD IS UNDERNEATH HIM...
MAYBE IT A LANDED POINTY-END UP...
MAYBE HE'S A DEAD...
ALWAYS THE OPTIMIST
I ADMIRE THAT IN A COWARD...
HE'S--I SAY--HE'S MOVING!!
ATSA CALLED RIGATONI MORTY'S --I SAY HE'S A DEAD...
poit!
I DON'T KNOW-- THAT ARM LOOKS PRETTY LIVELY TO ME...
YEAH, BOT HIS A OTHER ARM IS A HIS SWORD ARM...
POIT!
UH-- I SAY-- UH-OH...
I'LL NEVER EAT AT RIGATONI MORTY'S AGAIN...
I NO FEEL A SO GOOD NEITHER

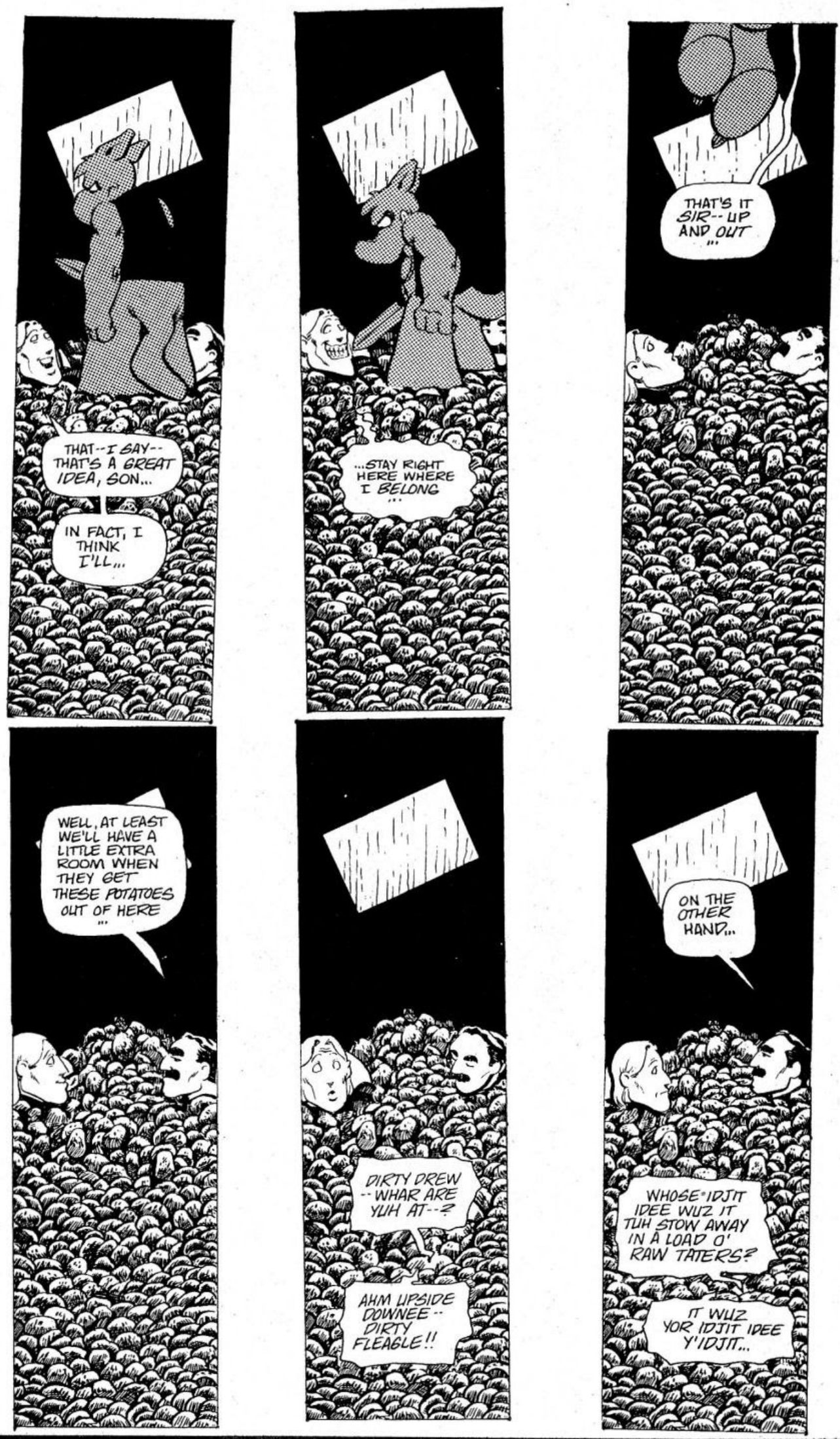
POIT
BE--I SAY--BE REASONABLE, SON...
REASONABLE²
CEREBUS IS TIRED OF BEING REASONABLE...
CEREBUS IS GOING TO TRY HOMICIDAL INSTEAD!
CEREBUS IS GOING TO CHOP ALL OF YOU UP AND MAKE BUREAUCRAT STEW...
...CEREBUS...
...CEREBUS IS...
AHA!
I'M READY FOR YOU THIS TIME!
WHOEVER-YOU-ARE THIS TIME--DROP RIGHT DOWN HERE AND CEREBUS WILL...

KA



SHOOM


NO! NO! Y'FLAMIN' IDIOT! -- I SAID T'DROP THE P'TATOES IN THE REAR 'OLD...
AWFULLY SORRY, GENTS -- A LITTLE MISUNDERSTANDIN' AT'S ALL
'AVE IT CLEANED UP IN A JIFF...
HEY! YOU UP THERE -- WHERE ARE WE DOCKED NOW?
WHY, PORT SEFRANIA, SIR...
DON'T CLOSE THAT TRAP!
CEREBUS IS LEAVING...
LEAVING...? I CAN'T REFUND YOUR FARE FOR THE OTHER 'ALF OF YOUR TRIP, SIR...
CEREBUS DOESN'T WANT A REFUND -- CEREBUS WANTS OUT!


THAT--I SAY--THAT'S A GREAT IDEA, SON...
IN FACT, I THINK I'LL...
...STAY RIGHT HERE WHERE I BELONG...
THAT'S IT SIR-- UP AND OUT...
WELL, AT LEAST WE'LL HAVE A LITTLE EXTRA ROOM WHEN THEY GET THESE POTATOES OUT OF HERE...
DIRTY DREW -- WHAR ARE YUH AT--?
AHM UPSIDE DOWNEE -- DIRTY FLEAGLE!!
ON THE OTHER HAND...
WHOSE*IDJIT IDEE WUZ IT TUH STOW AWAY IN A LOAD O' RAW TATERS?
IT WUZ YOR IDJIT IDEE Y'IDJIT...

Cerebus 112/113 (July August 1988) 'SQUARE ONE'

Cerebus returns to the scene of the crime; the small hotel he had commandeered as Pope during Church & State. Everyone is gone. His gold has been confiscated by Cirin, who has invaded and taken over lest during his absence.

Having worked on Church & State for five years (Gerhard for almost four), we were definitely at low ebb emotionally when it came to working on the book. I remember working on 110 and 111 and both of us just had this over-whelming anger about it. As opposed to the exhilaration of finishing 'High Society', 'Church & State' was just this major 'down'. We had a bottle of Dom Perignon in the studio fridge ready to pop open to celebrate finally coming to the end of this mammoth project and as I recall it just sat there unopened for a month or two. We had obviously anticipated at some genetic level the overwhelming indifference that was going to be the reaction. Virtually no mail came in for a month or two. The only review or comment in the fan press was Heidi Macdonald's 'The end of Church & State was just too darn cosmic.' To this day, I find that the most extraordinarily moronic reaction in a medium where the blowing up of the universe and getting super-powers from radioactivity are the norm rather than the exception.

Anyway.

We took some time off. Not a lot of time, but a couple of weeks or so. I had decided that we would do a double issue of 112/113 and release it in August. Only one cover to do, one letters page, one back cover. I thought it would cut down on the work load a little bit.

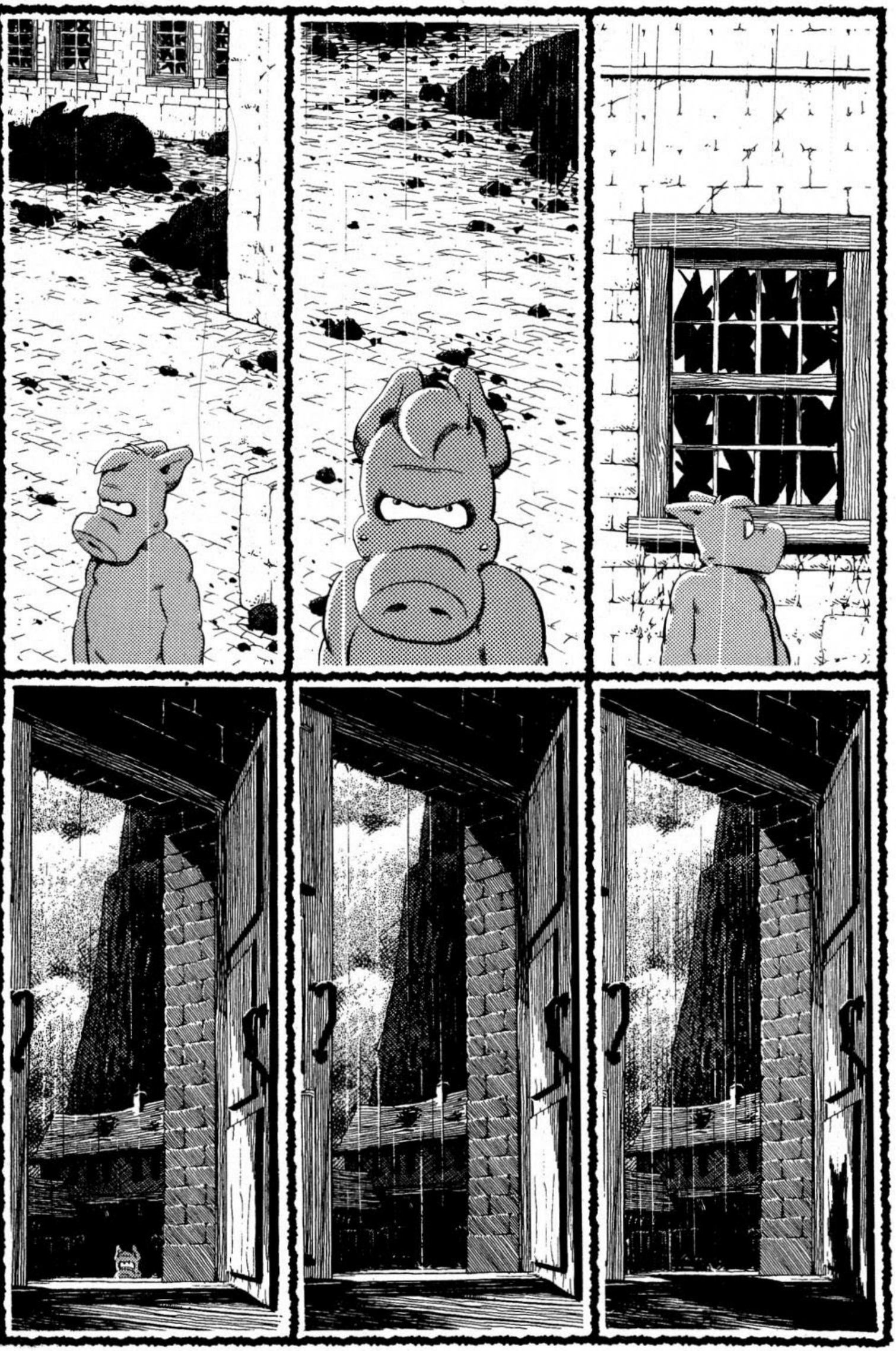
It was a nightmare.

At the time, we had a third floor studio on King Street which was very long and narrow and we had twenty nails up on the wall with clips hanging off of them. As we finished an issue, we hung the pages up on the clips (in the present studio we don't have any long and narrow space, so the nails are in four rows of five pages each). For 112/113, Gerhard put another row of nails above and another row of nails below. It took forever to fill them up. No matter how hard we were working; no matter how much extra time we put in after hours, we still had a wall full of empty clips. Of course, by that time it was too late to back out or change the format. All we could do was keep going. Of course it didn't help that any visitors to the studio could 'read' what we had done in a little under fifteen seconds.

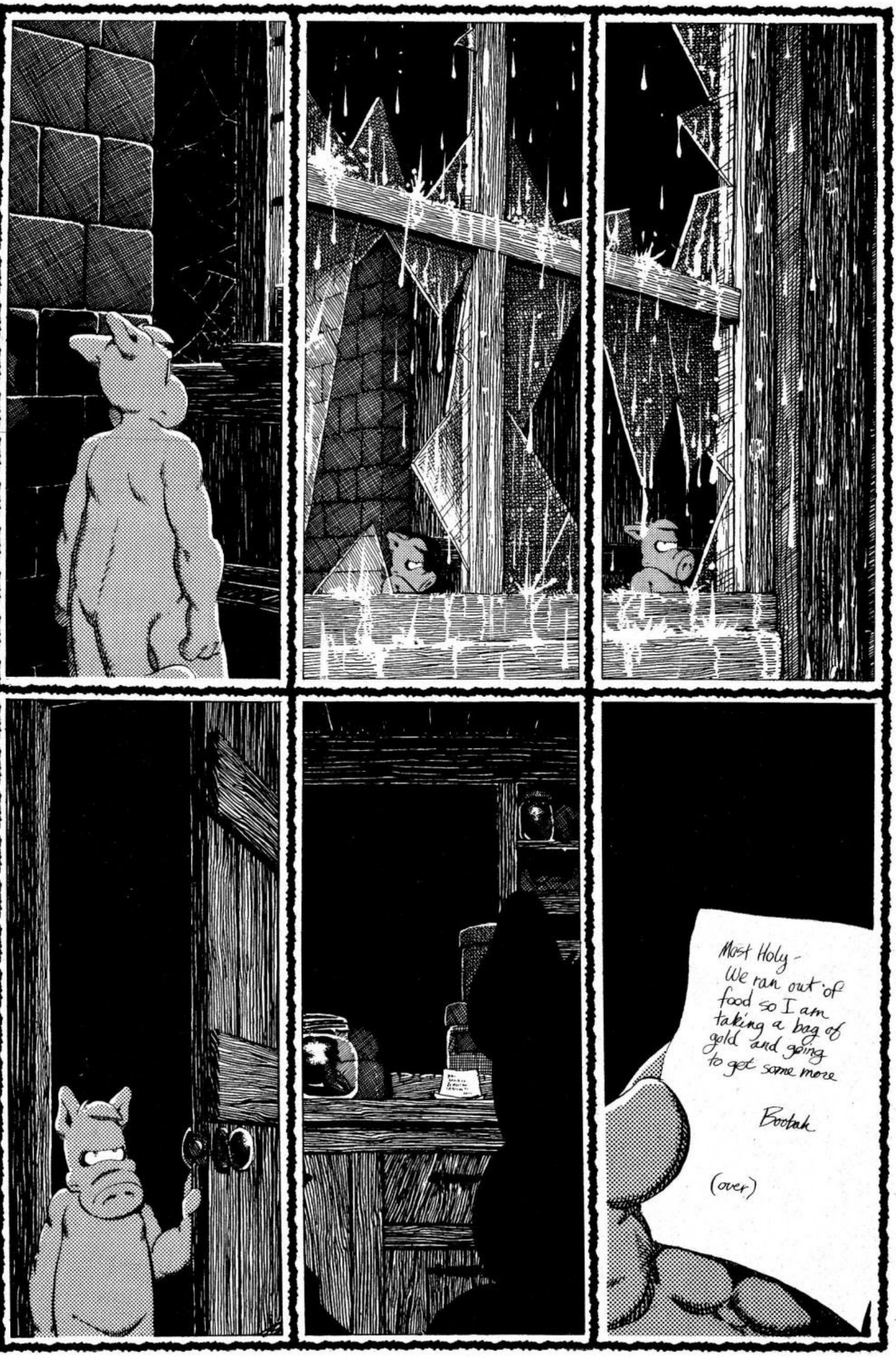
Of course five years later on, I read it and I'm very happy with the results. I also tend to agree with people that it *is* an epilogue to *Church & State* in a way that 'Exodus' is not an epilogue to *High Society.* We even talked to the printer about the possibility of adding it to the back of *Church & State* volume two in the later printings. *C&S II* is already the thickest of the reprint volumes and there would be many problems caused in binding the books by trying to add five more eight-page signatures.

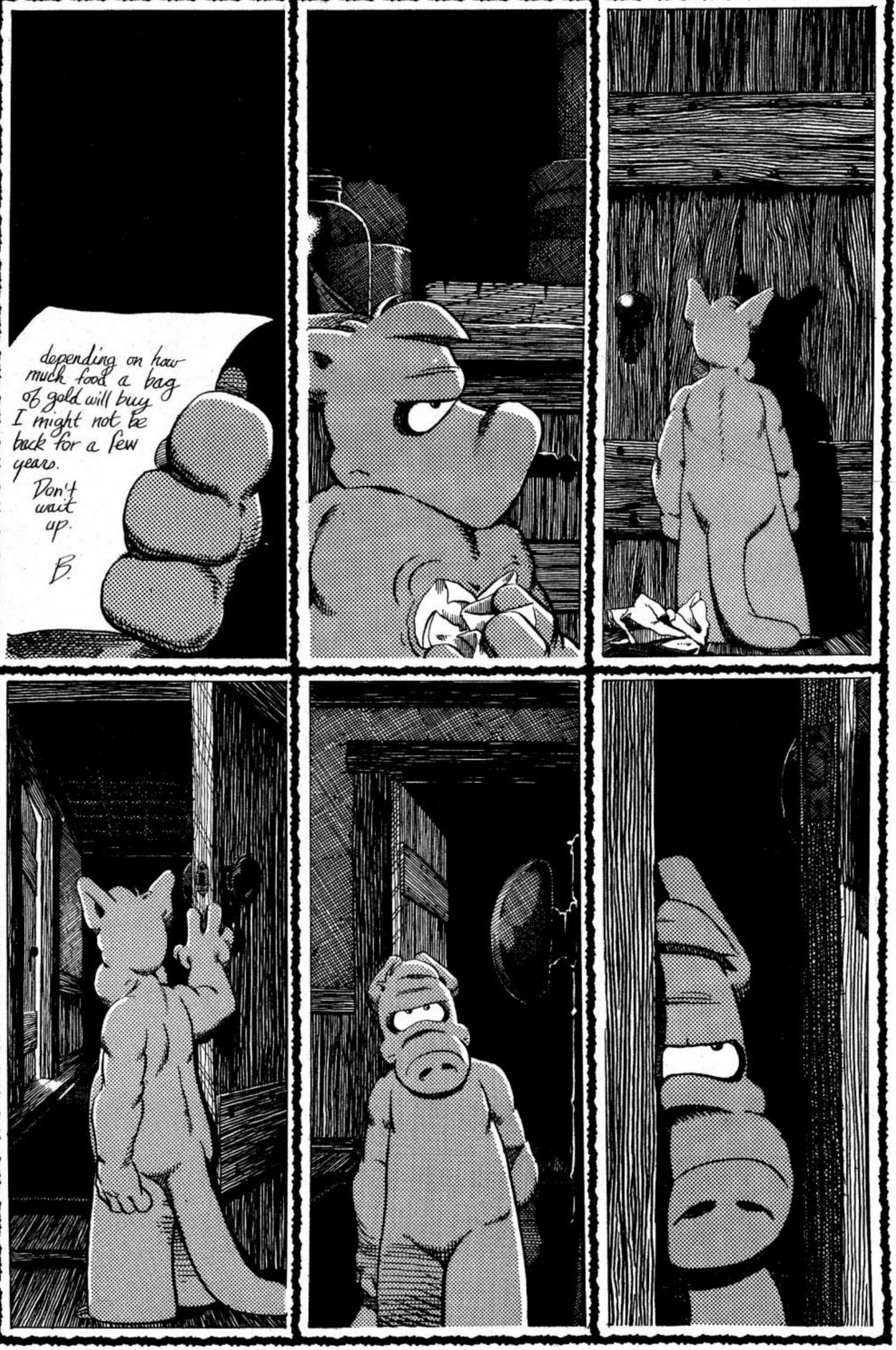
For those people who have never read Cerebus before, it's difficult to 'set up' the premise for 'Square One' without giving away the end of *Church & State.* So (without spoiling the ending of C&S), I can tell you that Cerebus has met a seemingly omnipotent figure at the conclusion of his term as Pope. Said omnipotent figure, The Judge, answers Cerebus' questions, in the course of which Cerebus is informed that he will never conquer the known world (which he has come close to doing in *High Society* and *Church & State*) and that further, he lives only a short time longer and dies, alone unmourned and unloved. He is also informed (among other things) that the Earth is eventually destroyed in the distant future when technology advances to such an extent that a weapon is invented which will permit someone, with a push of a button, to cause the sun to super-nova. That someone, Cerebus is informed, does so.

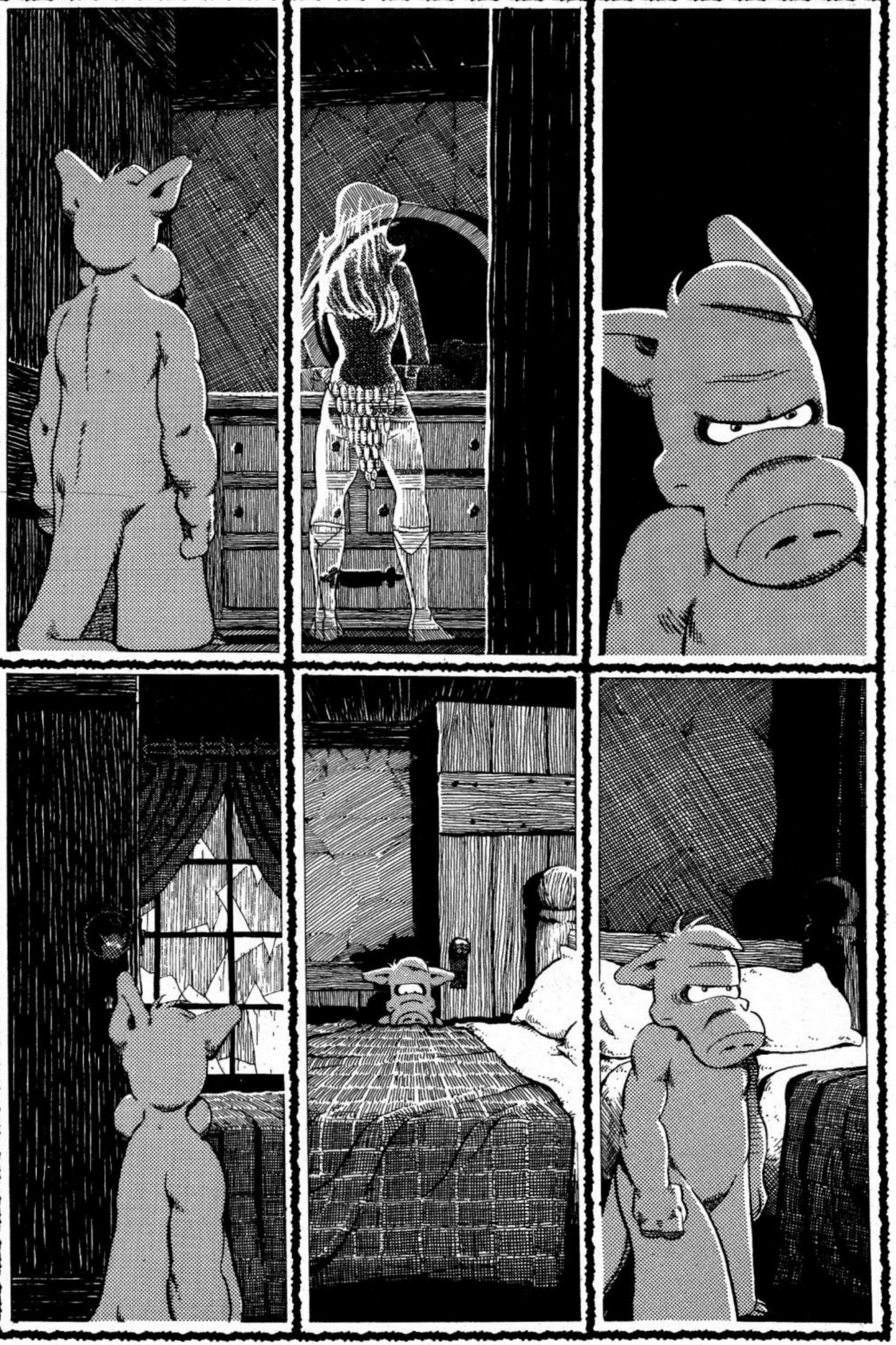
Cheery stuff, eh?

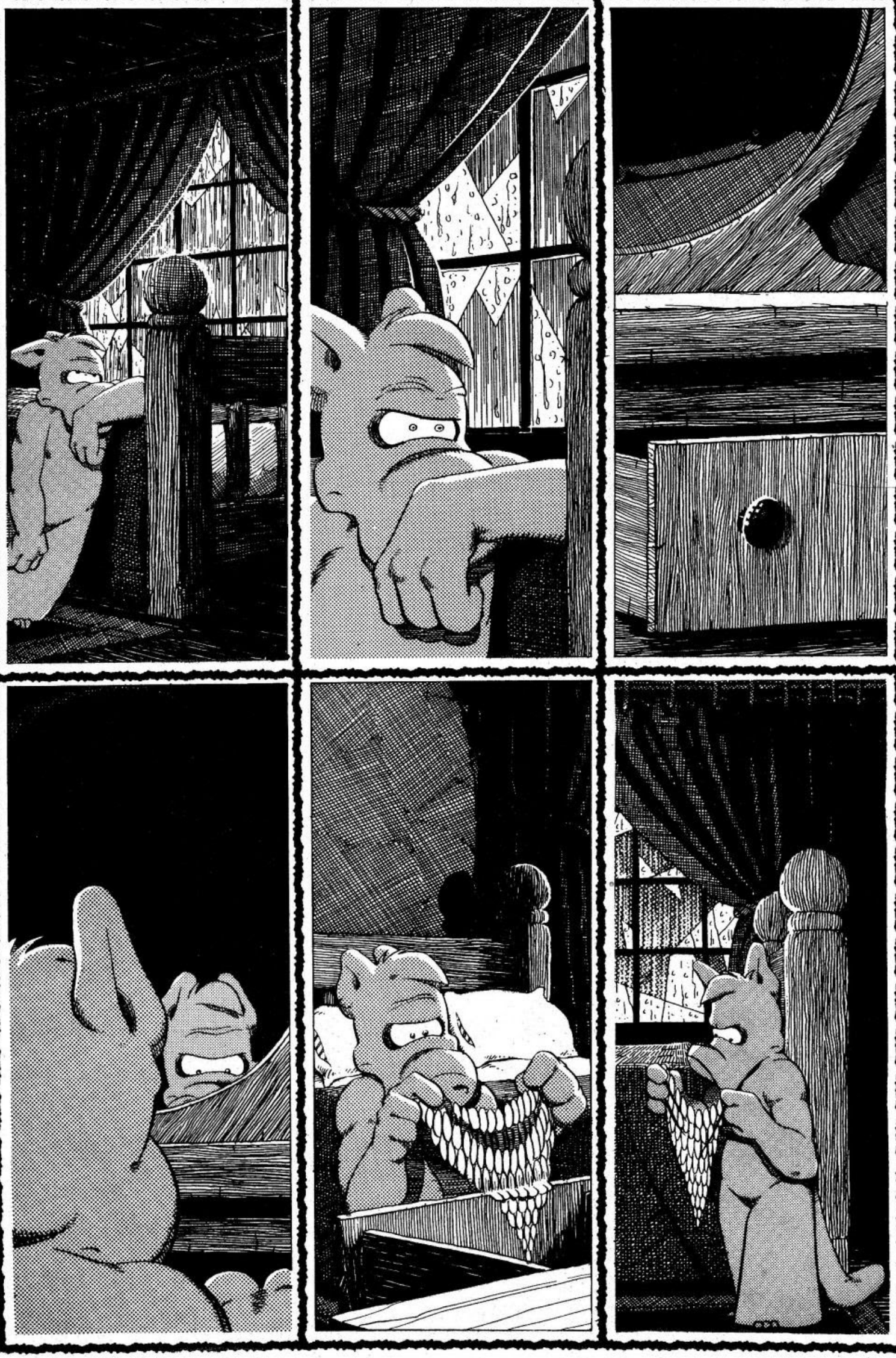


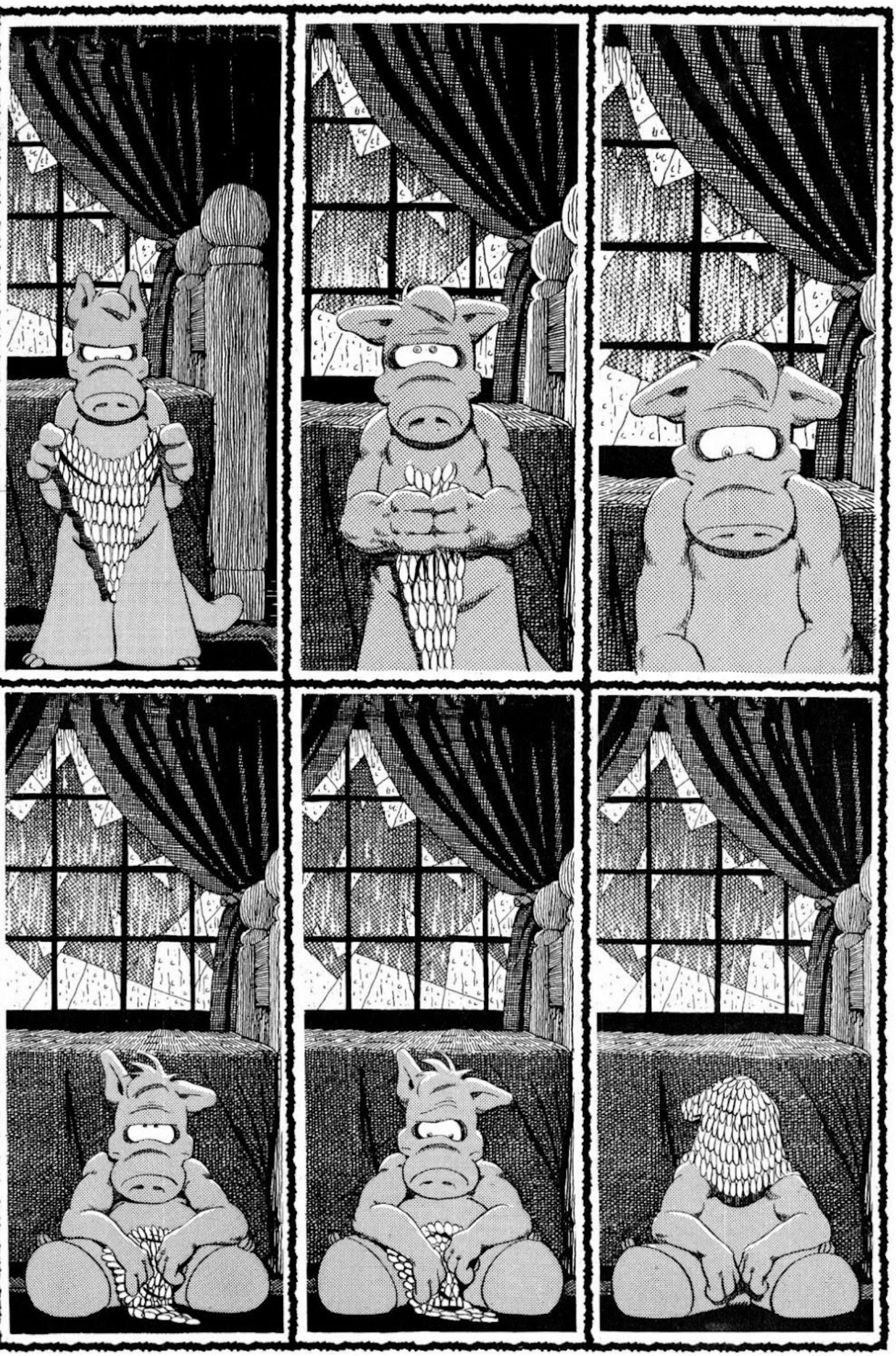
SQUARE ONE

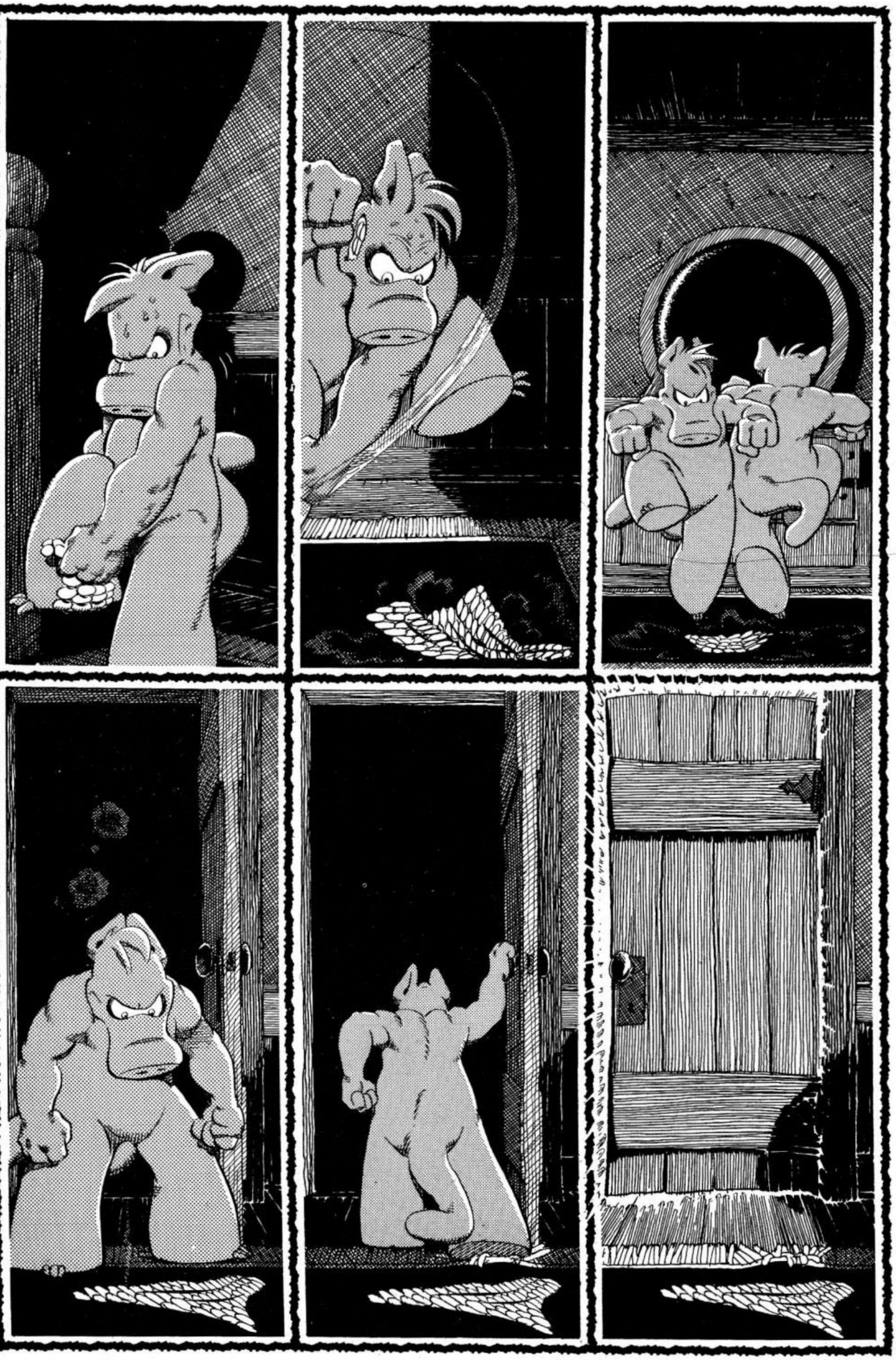

Most Holy -
We ran out of food so I am taking a bag of gold and going to get some more
Bootak
(over)

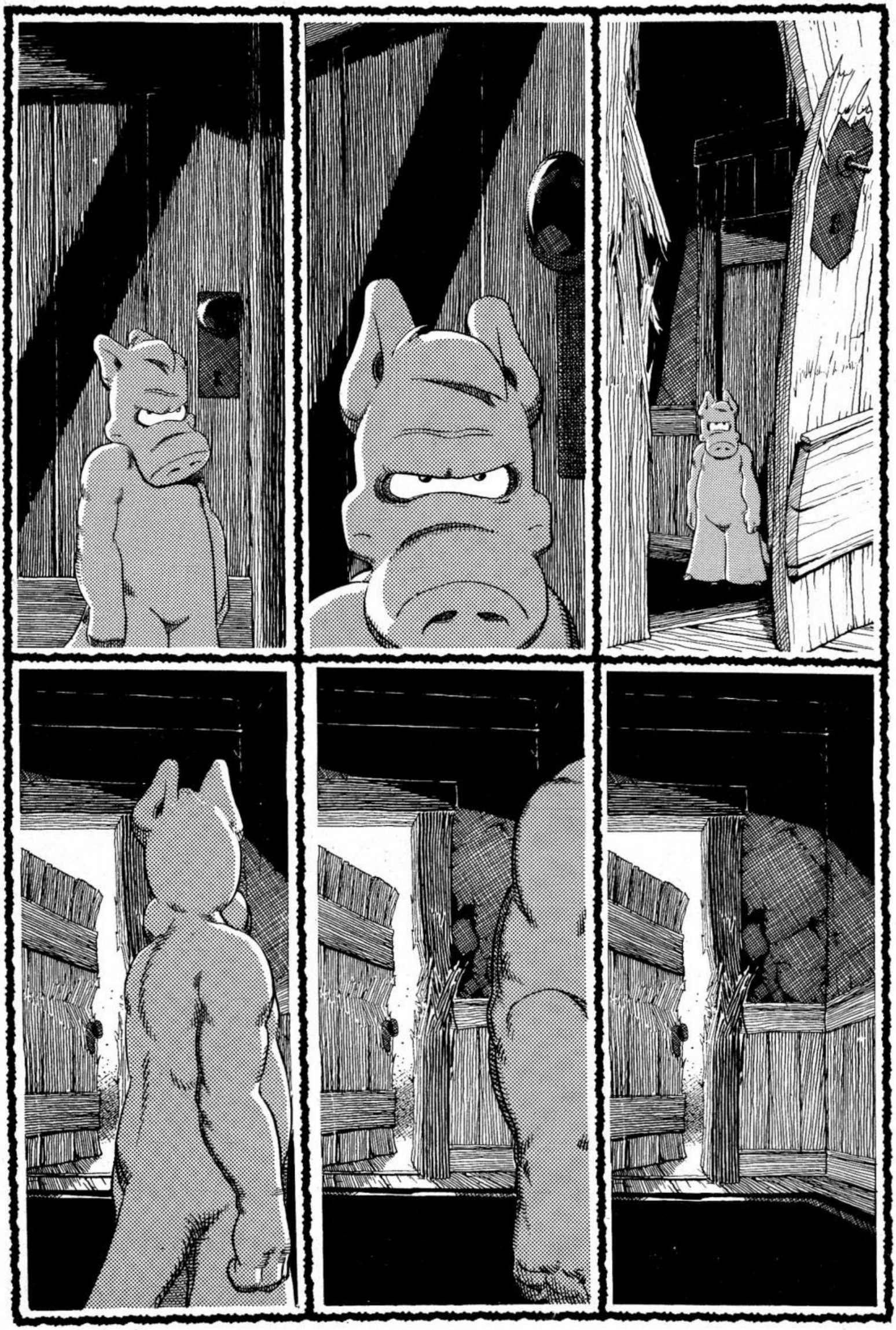

depending on how much food a bag of gold will buy I might not be back for a few years.
Don't wait up.
B.

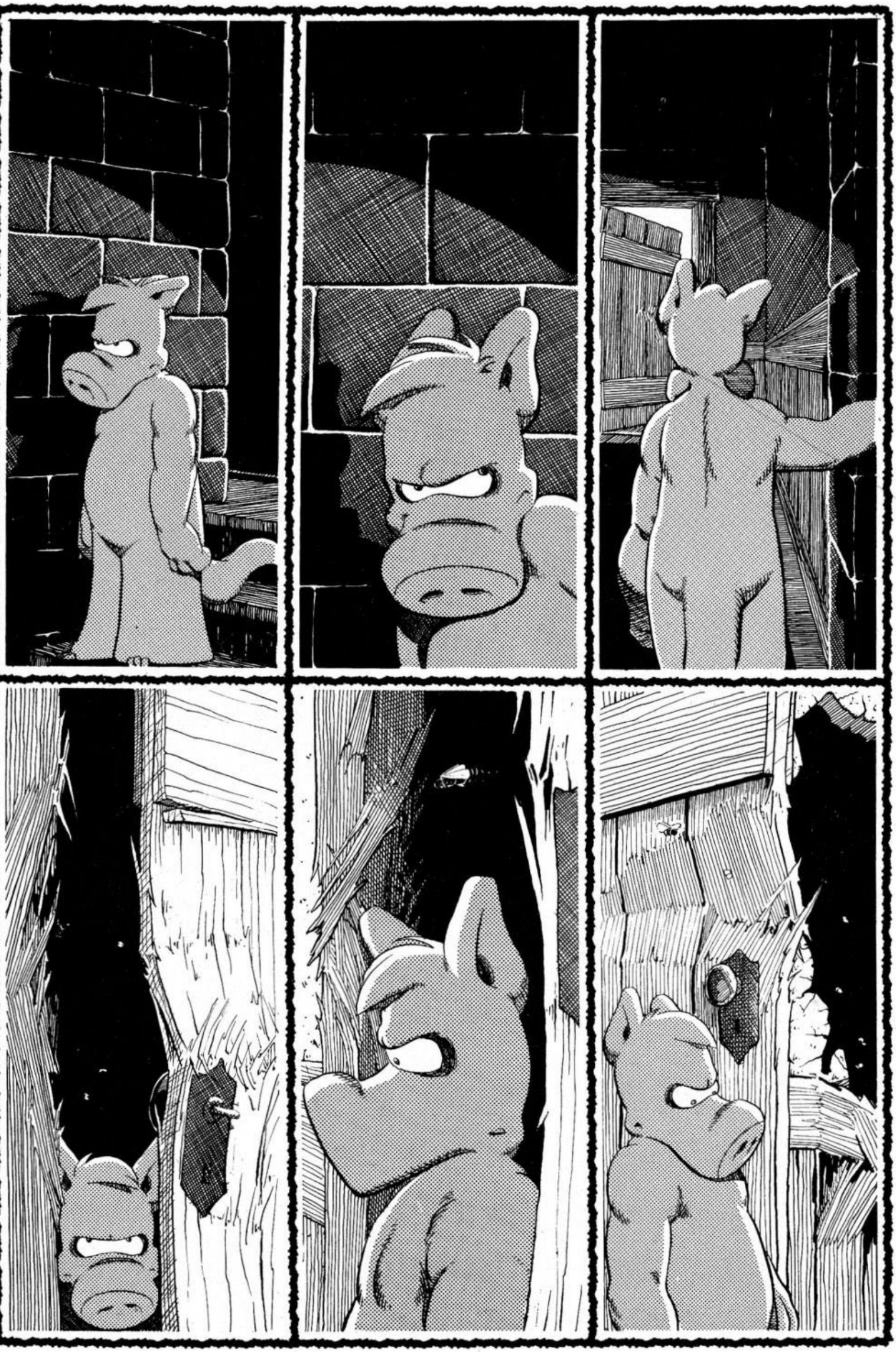


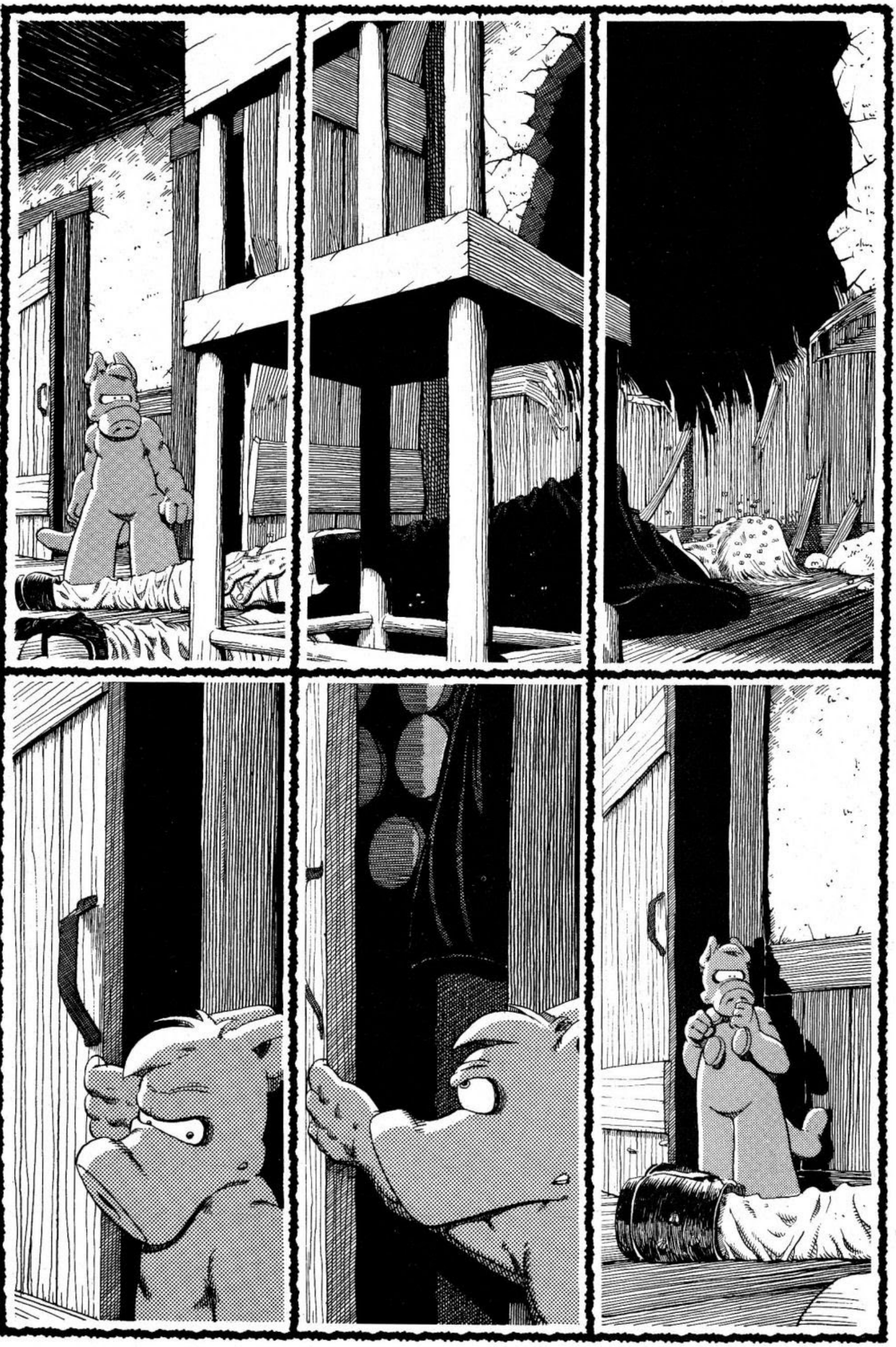


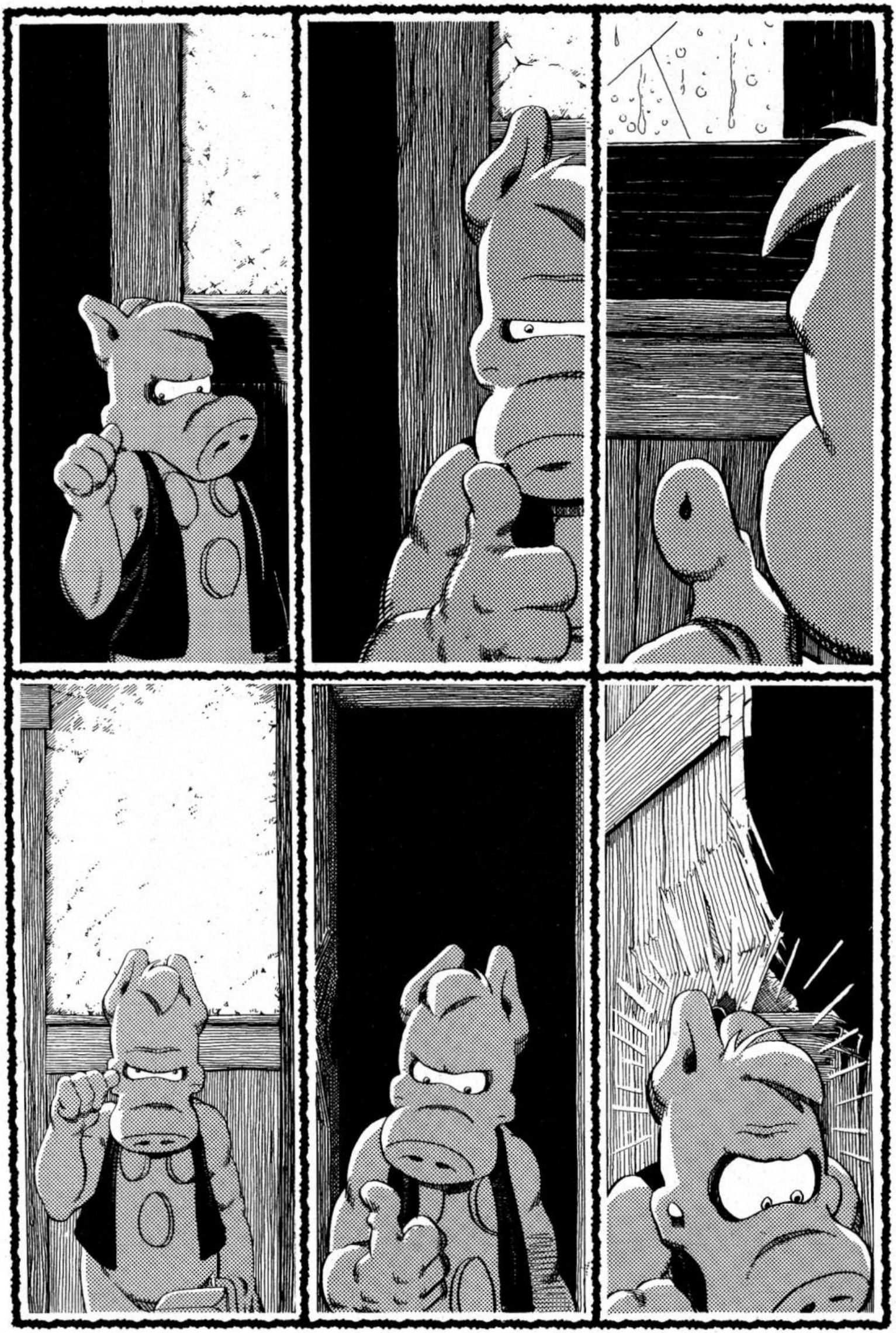


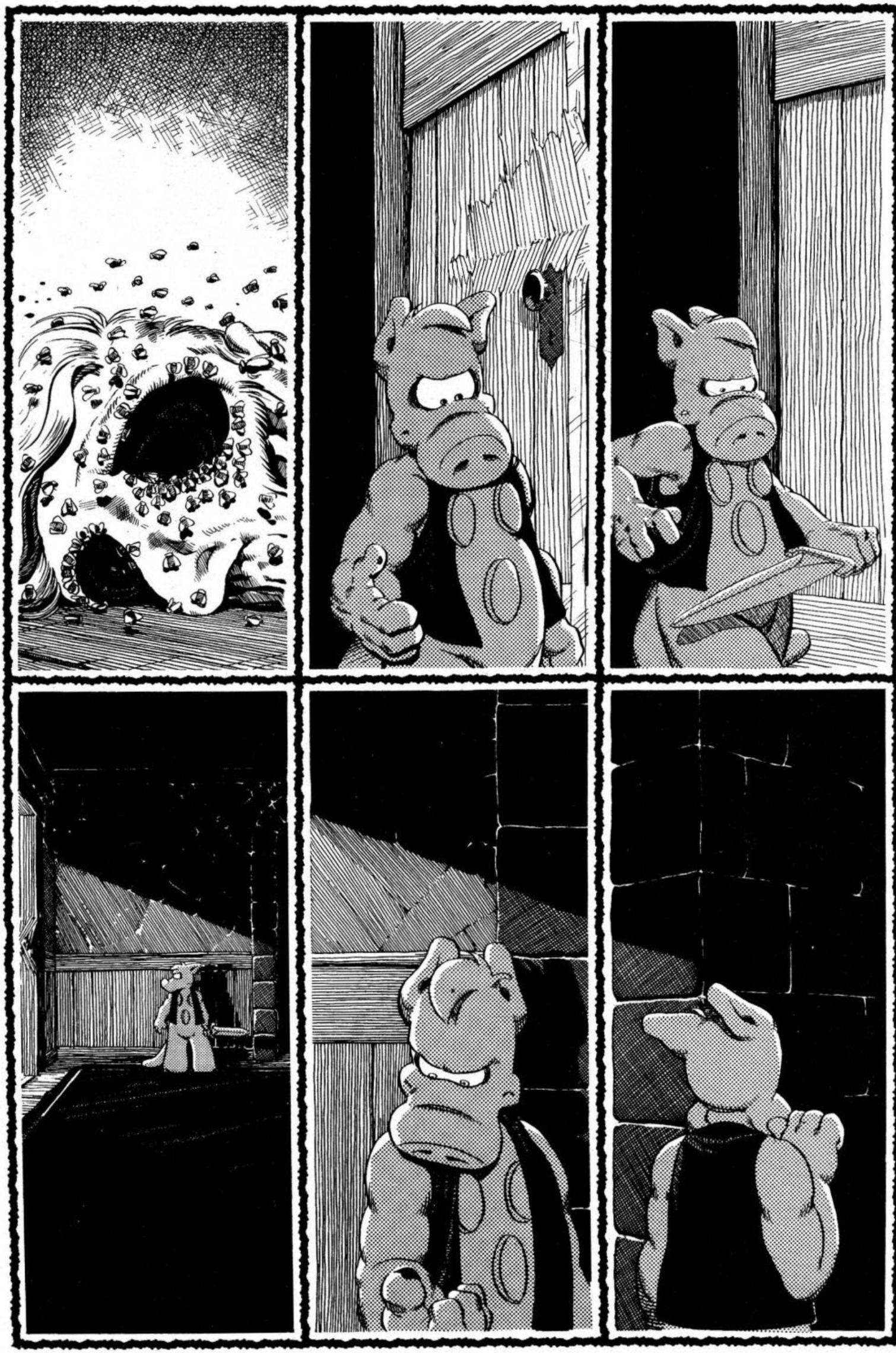


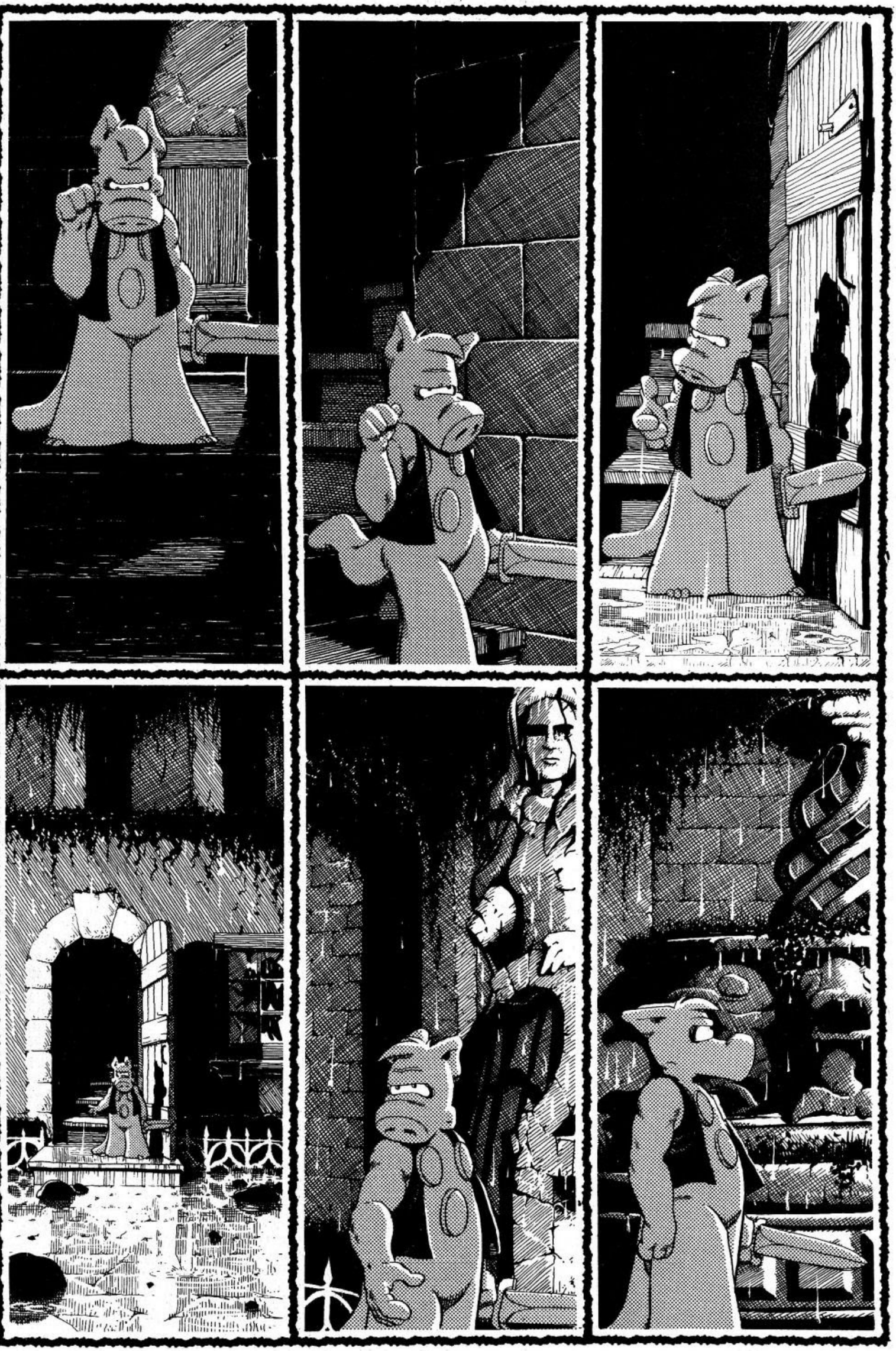


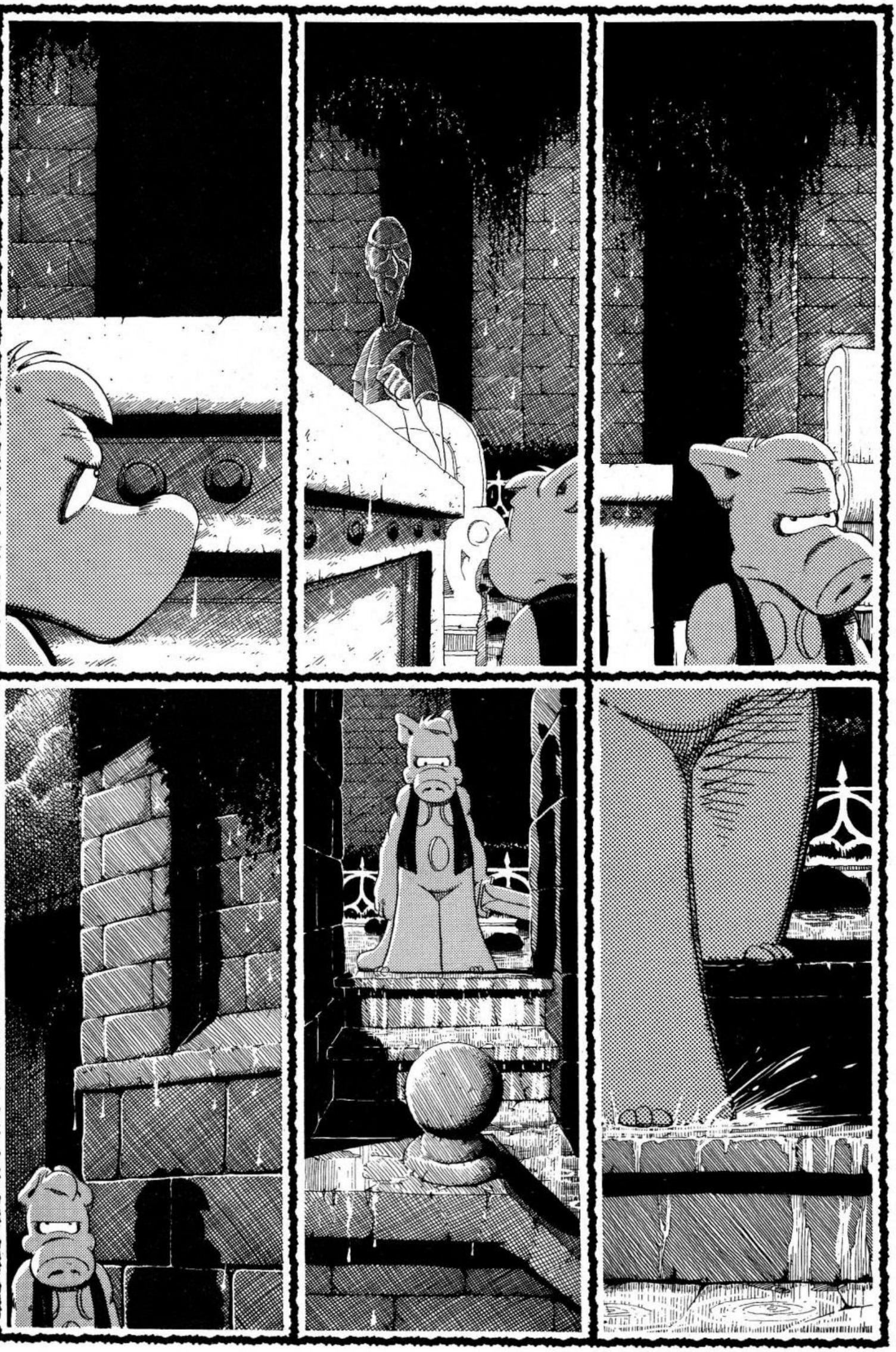


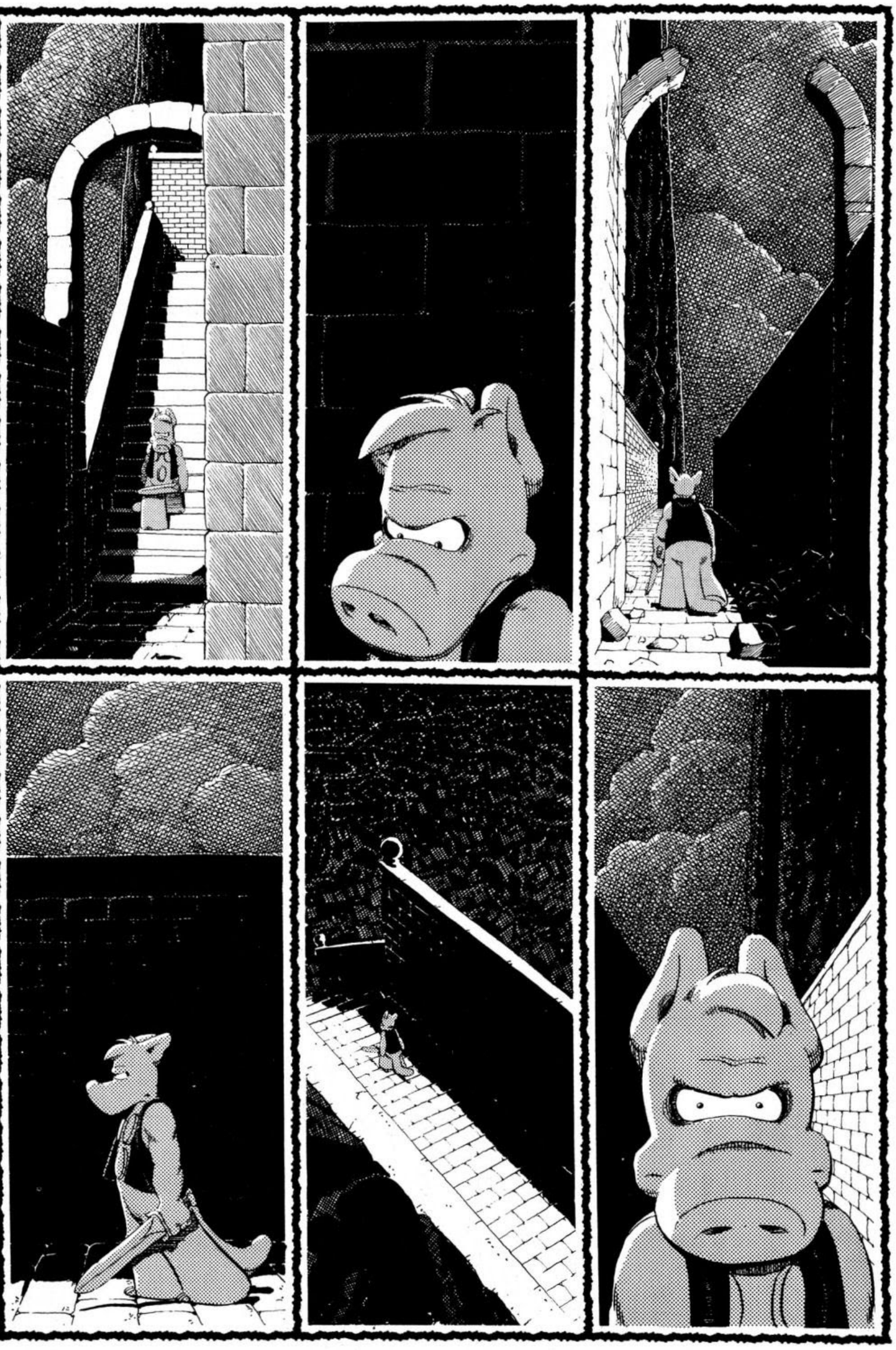


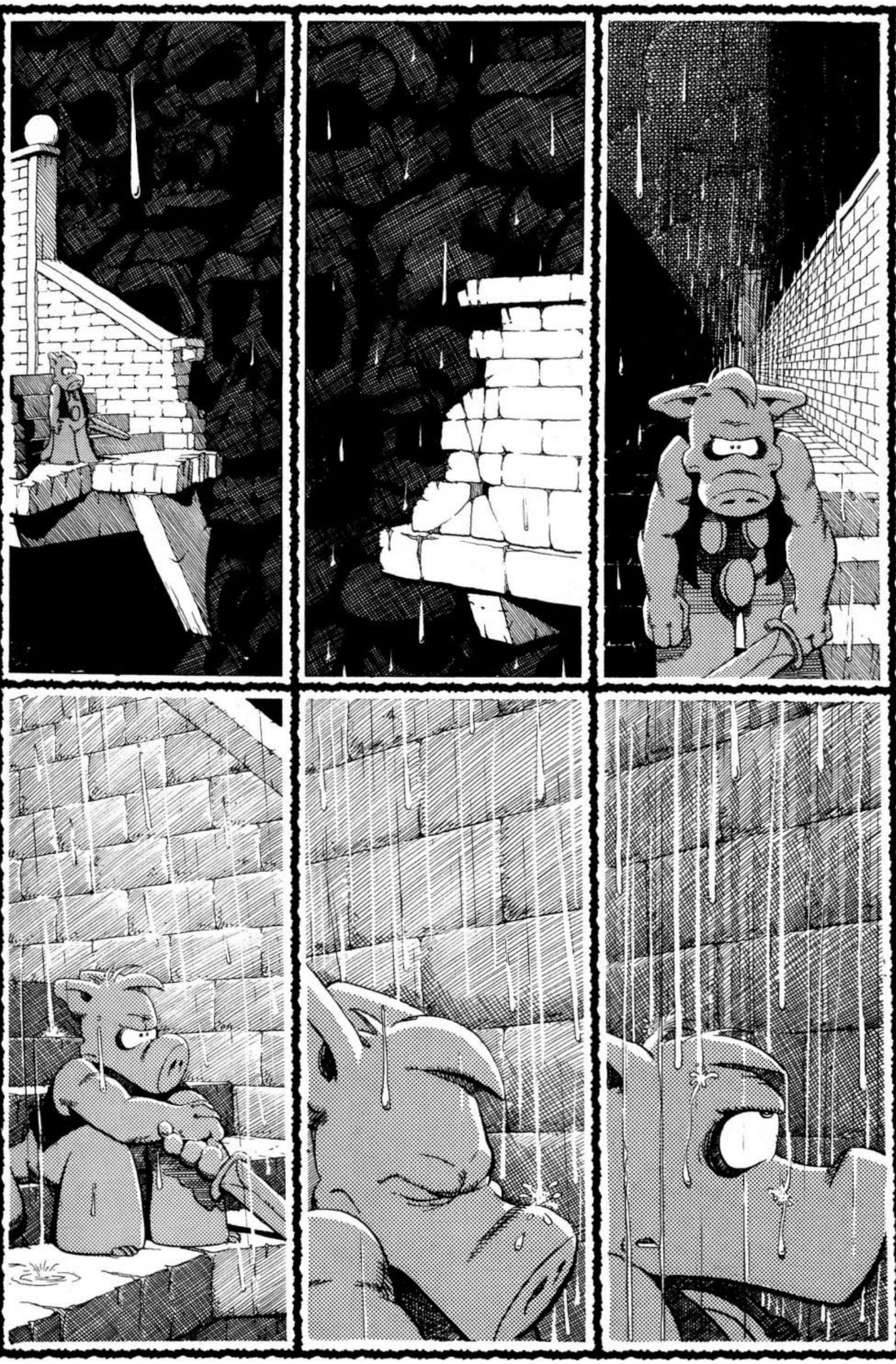




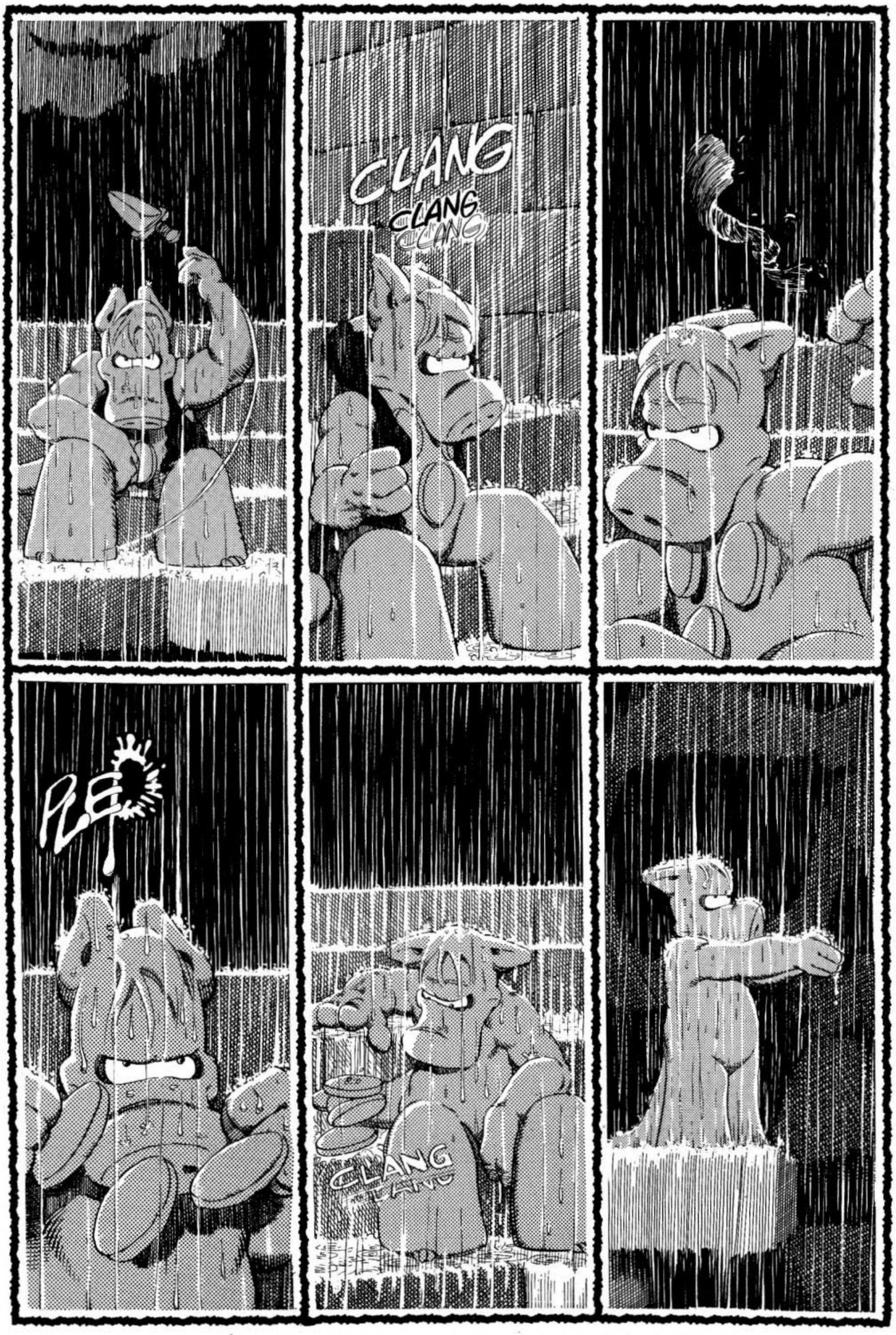


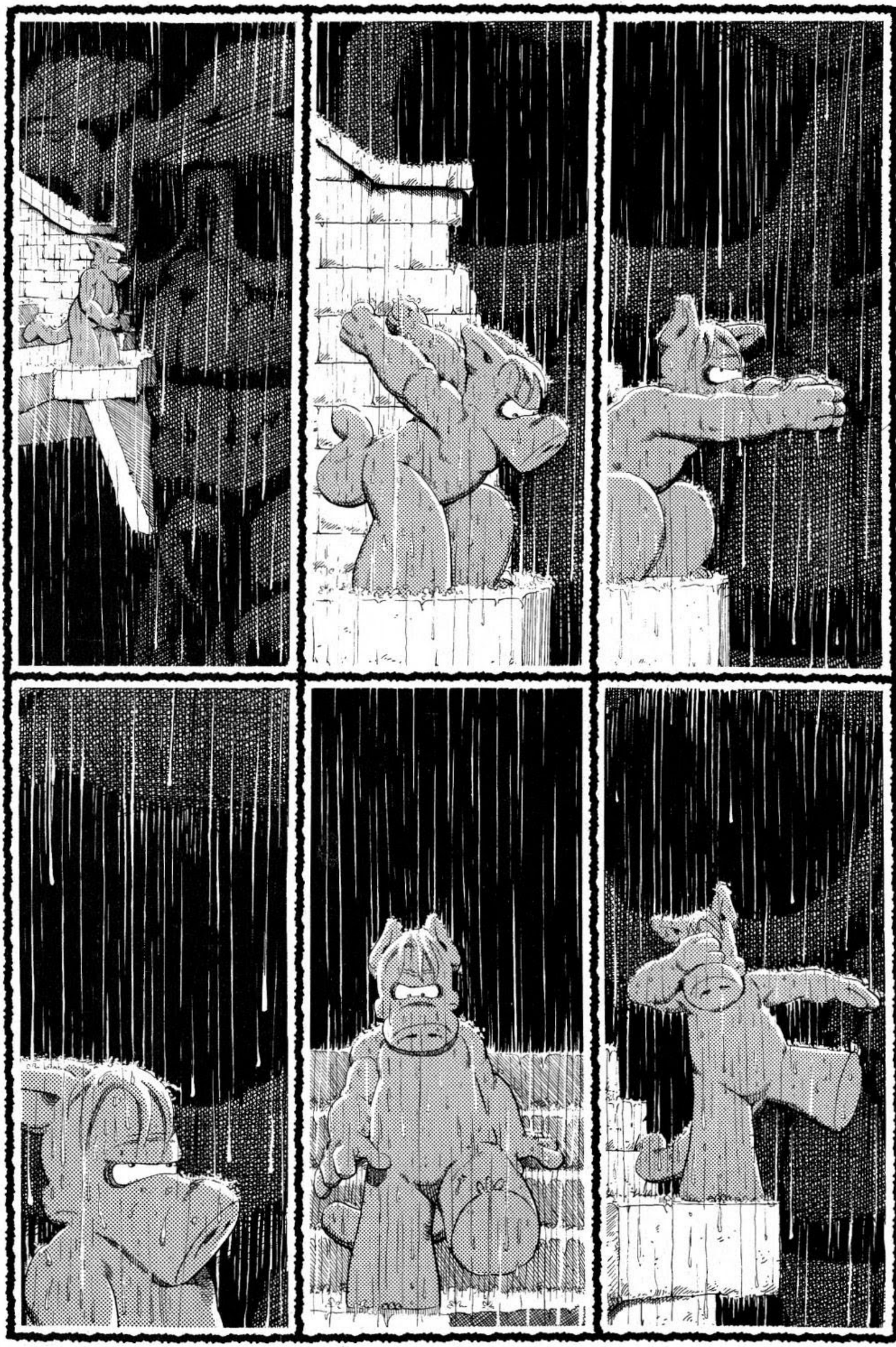


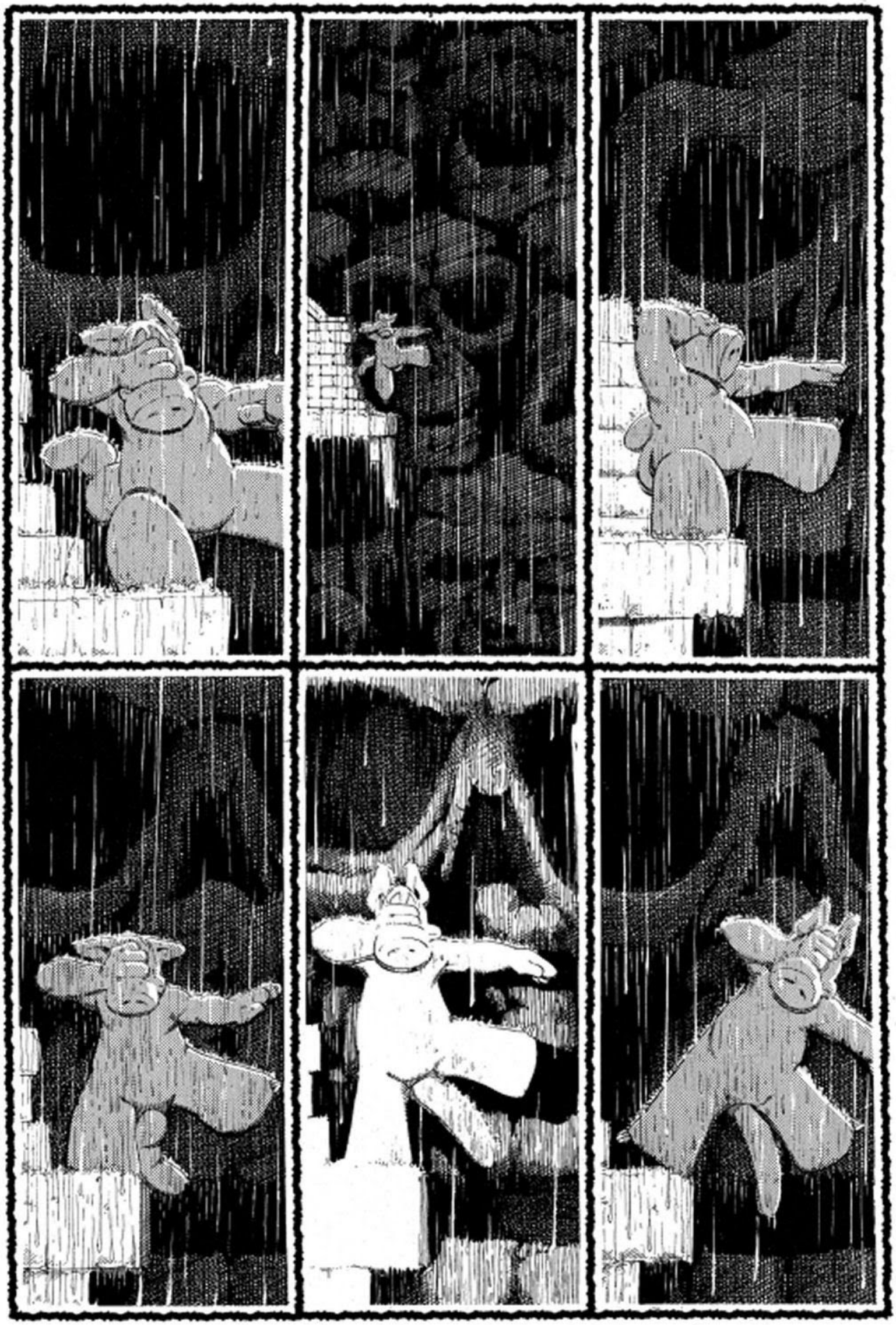


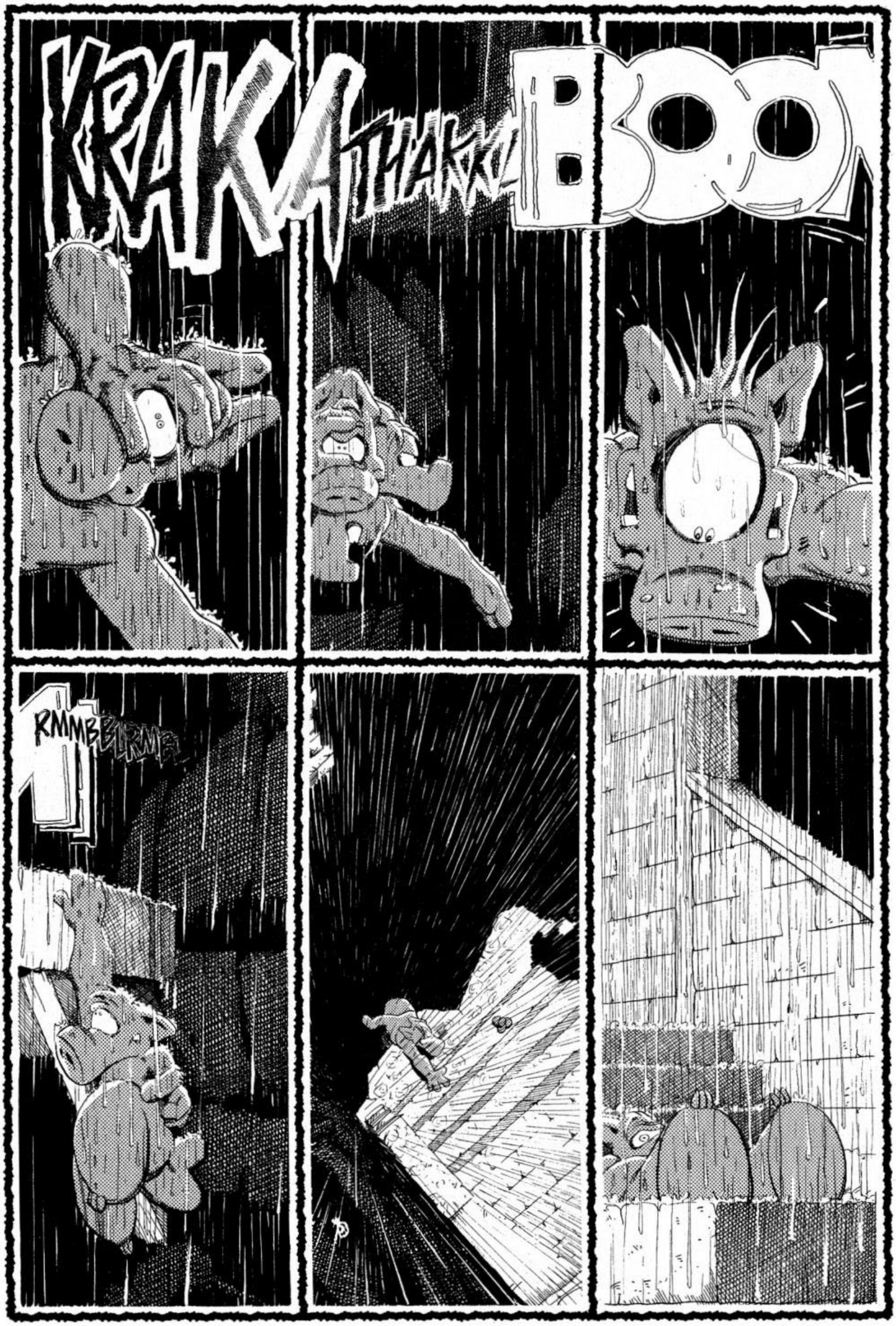


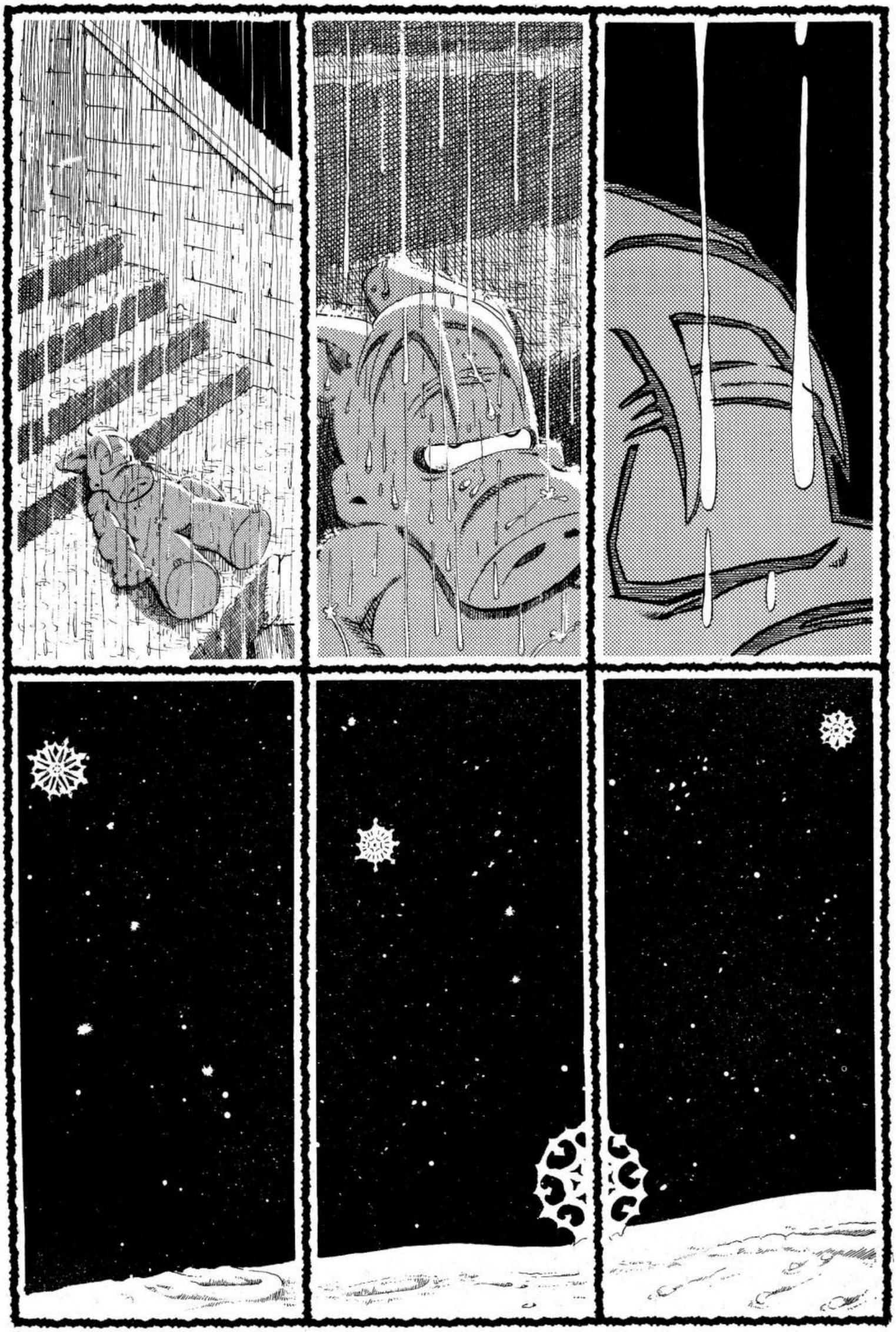
...die
alone...
UNMOURNED
and
UNLOVED
...

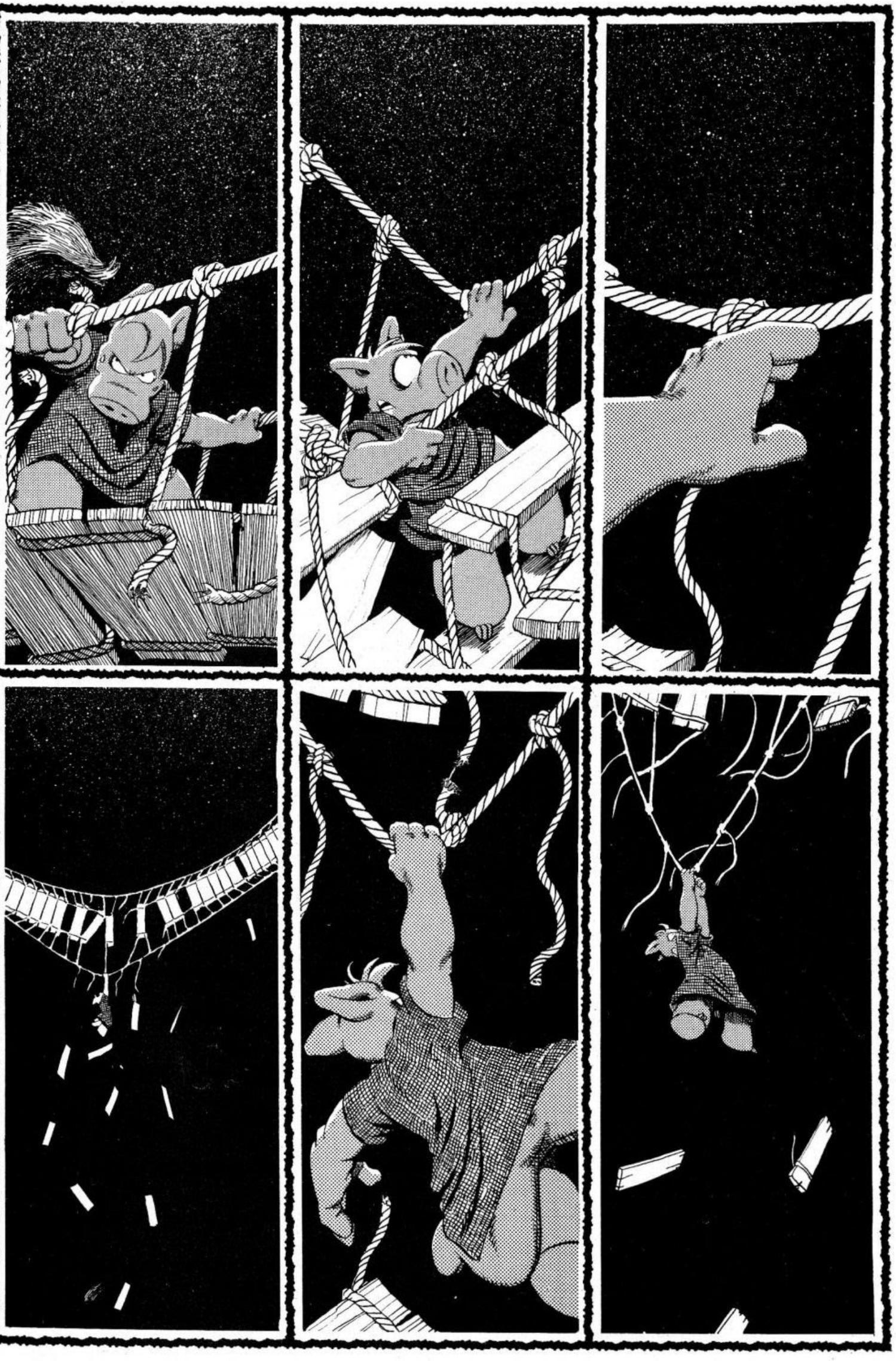

CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
PLE
CLANG
CLANG

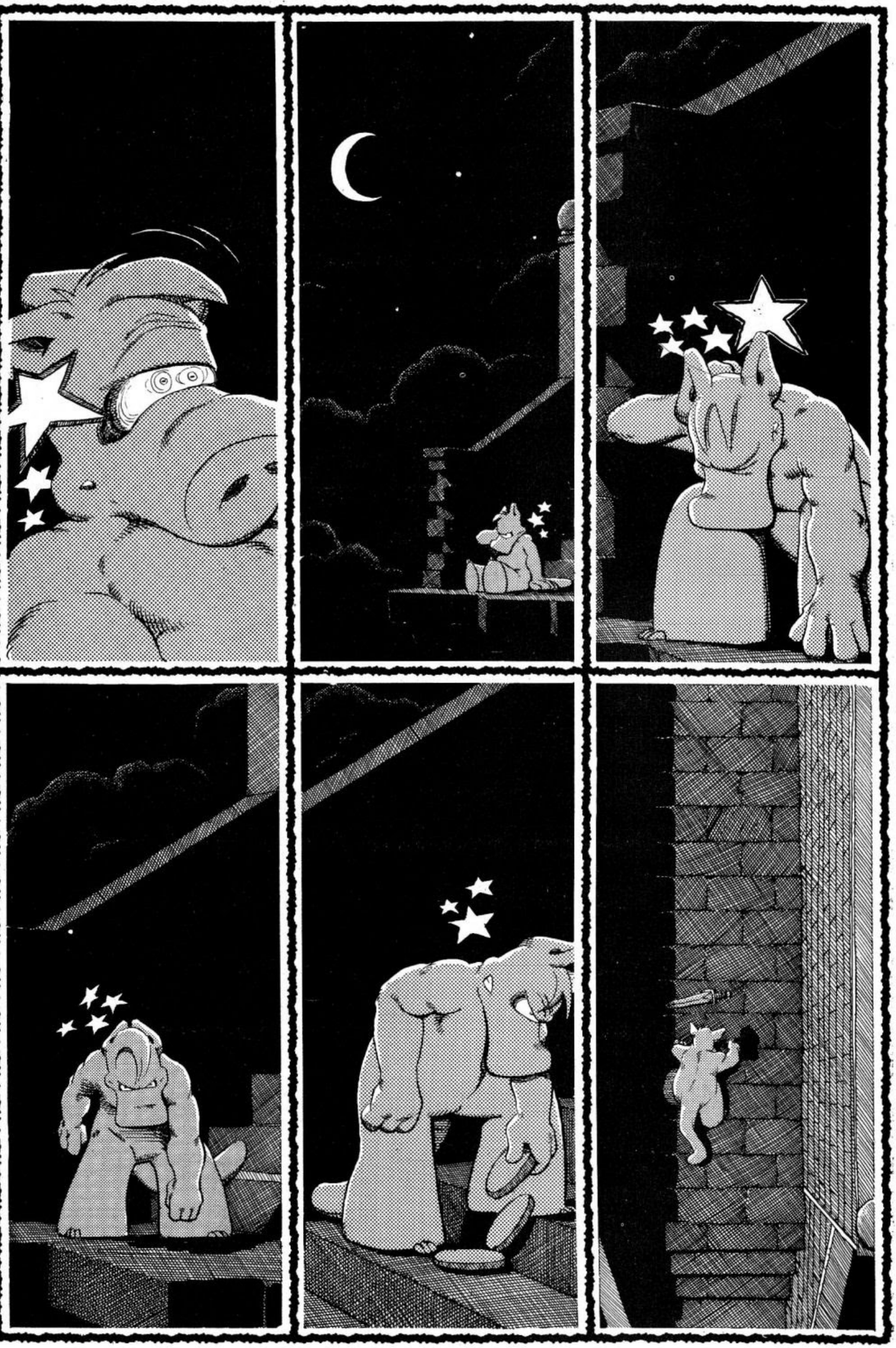


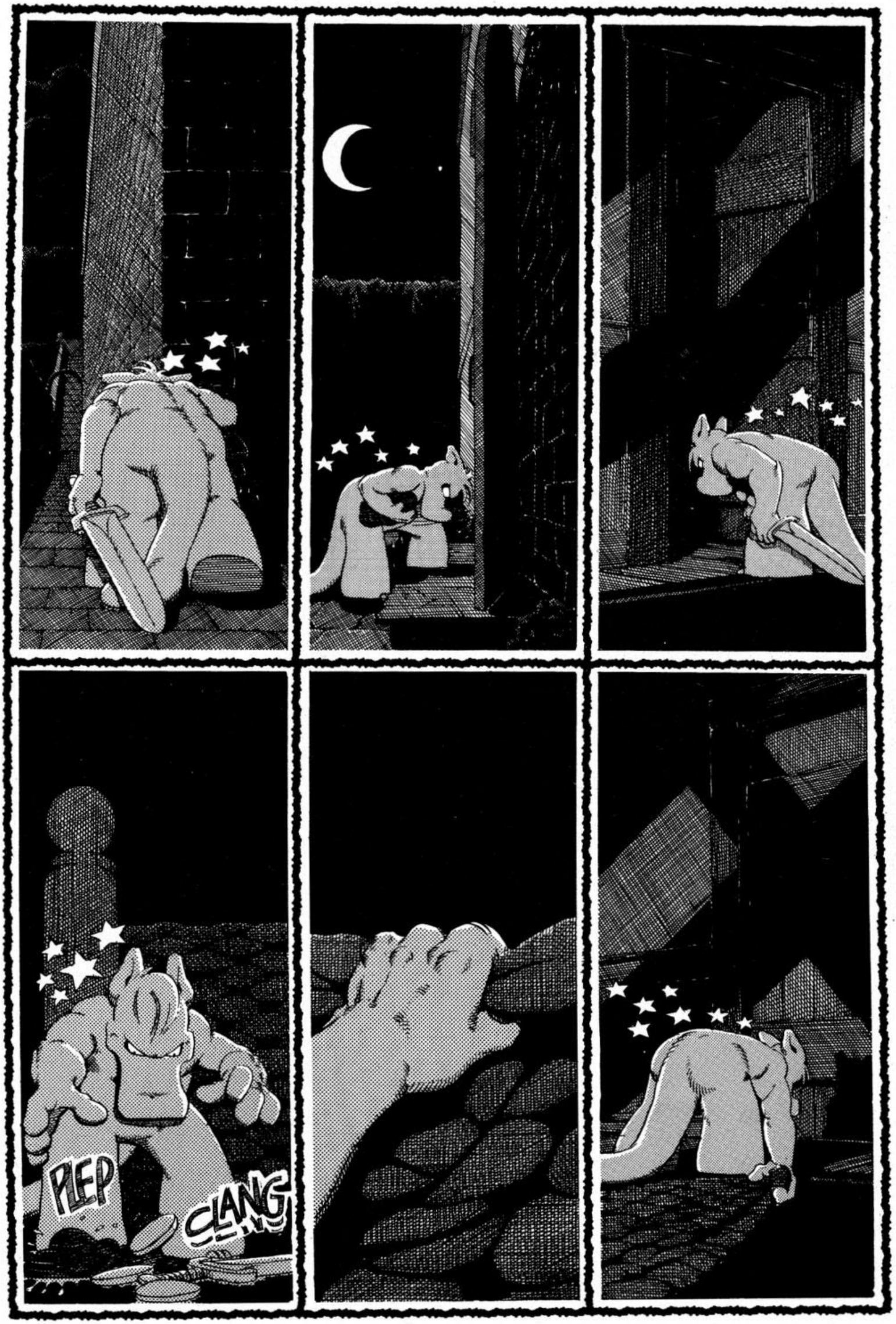


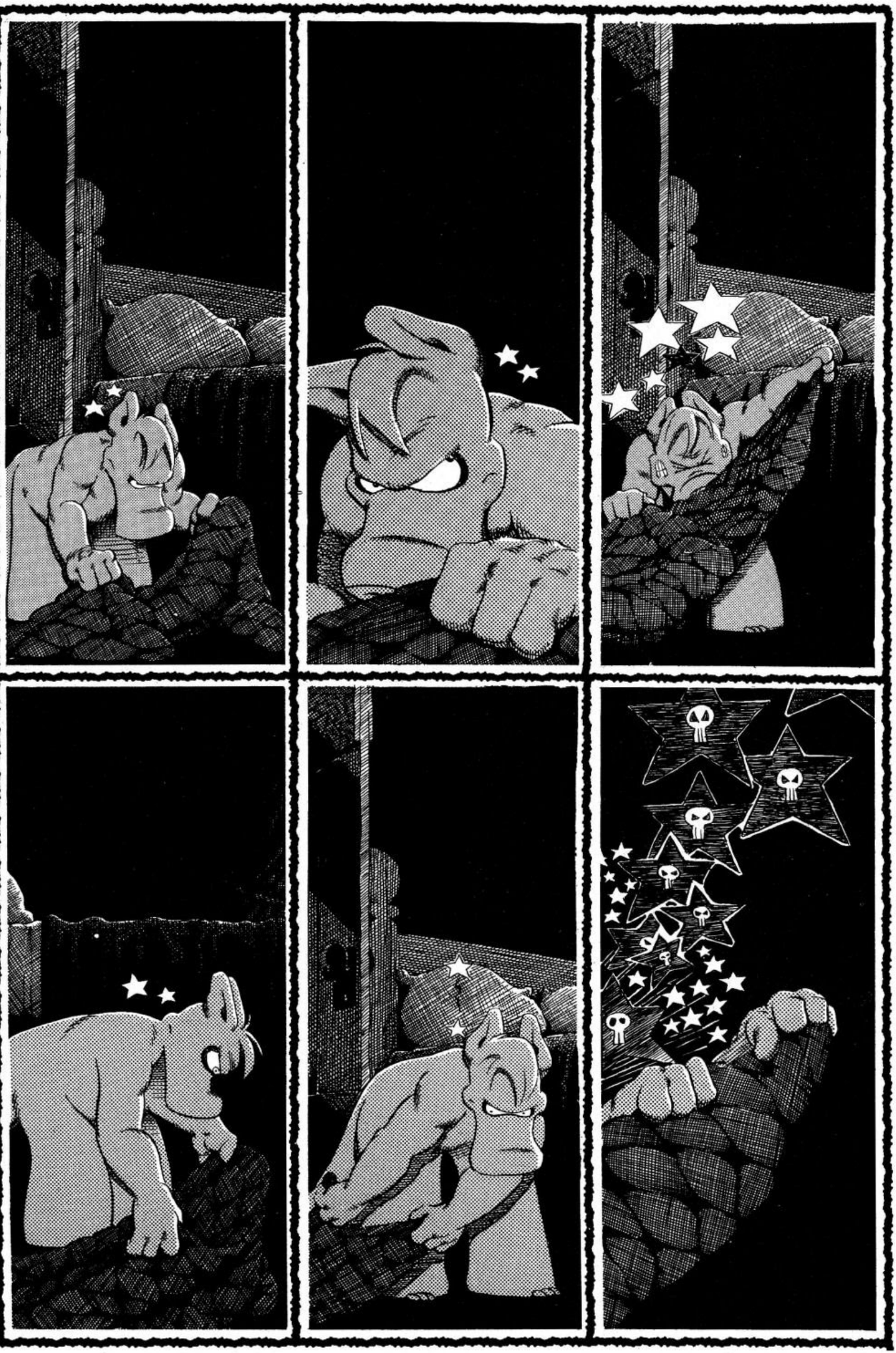

KRAK
ATTACK!
BOO
RMMBLRMMBLRMMBLRMMBL

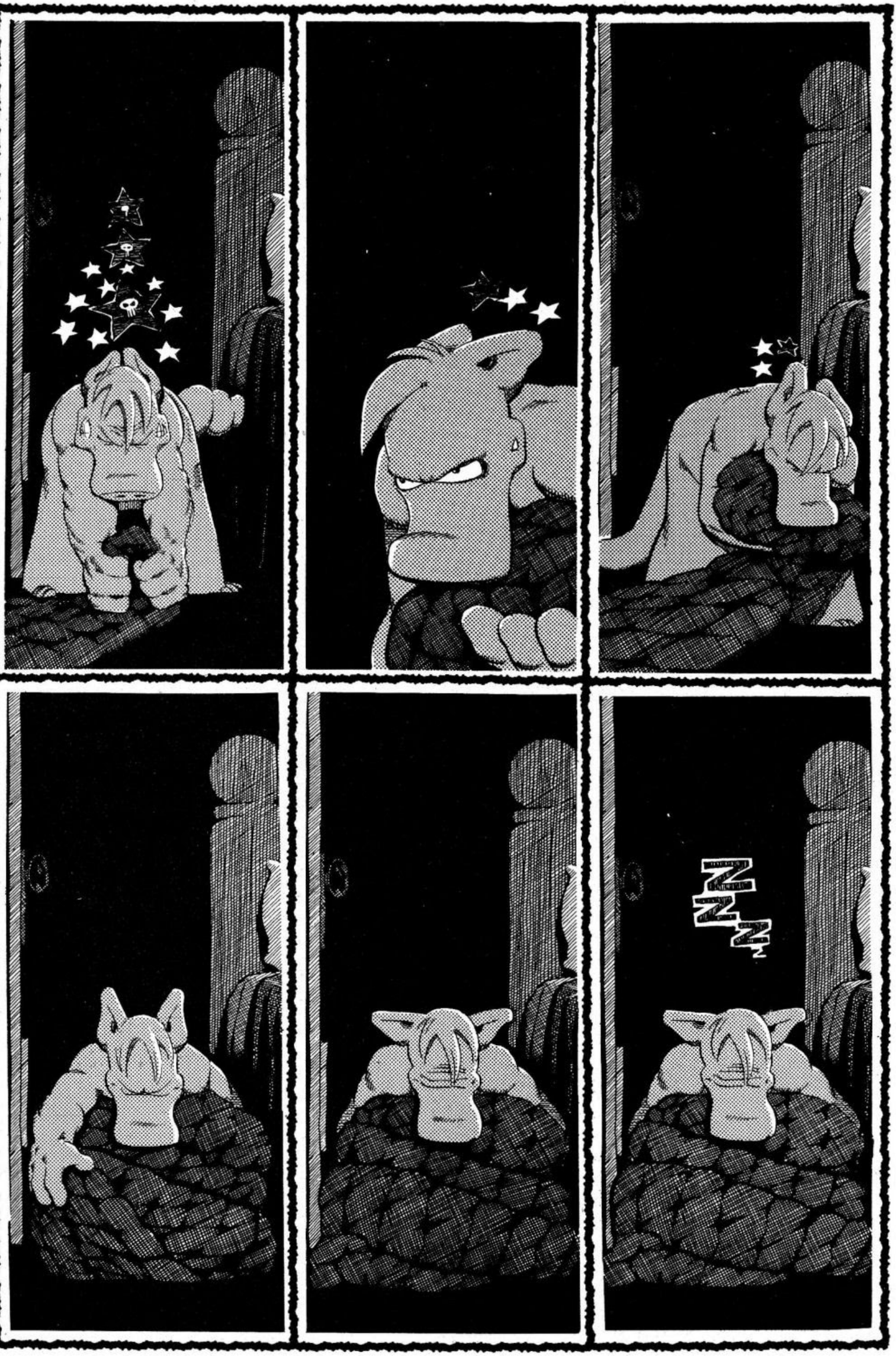


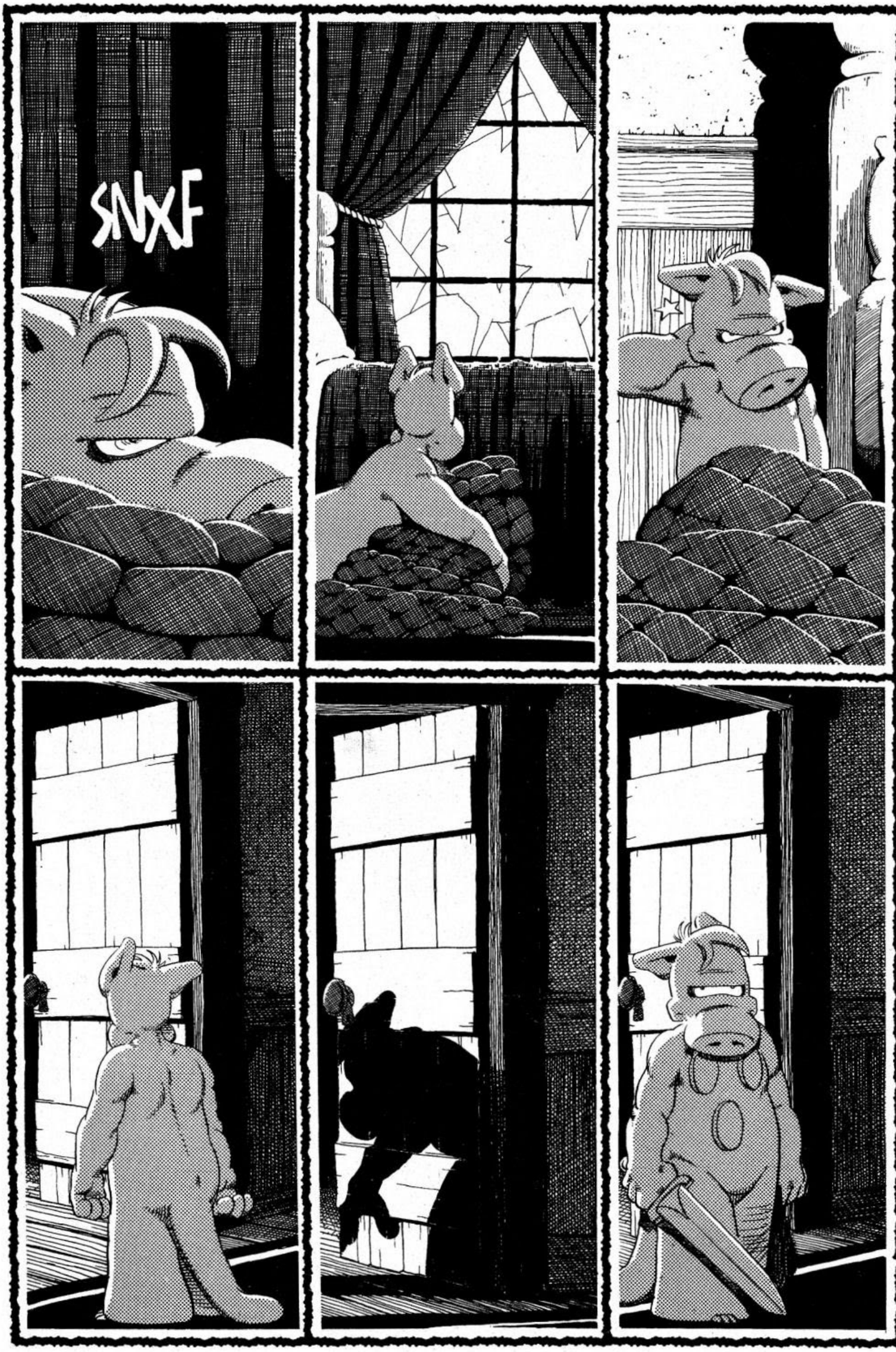


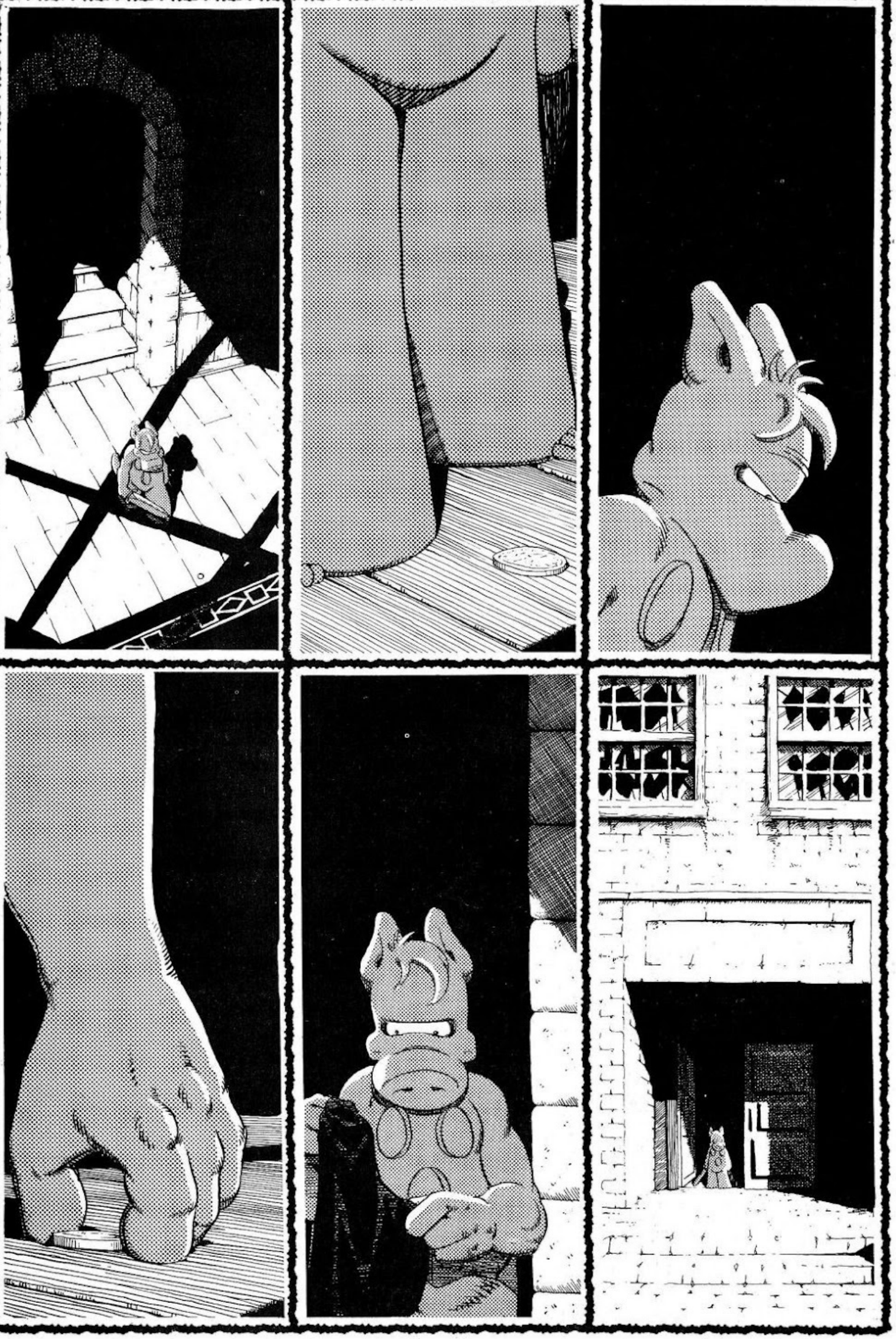


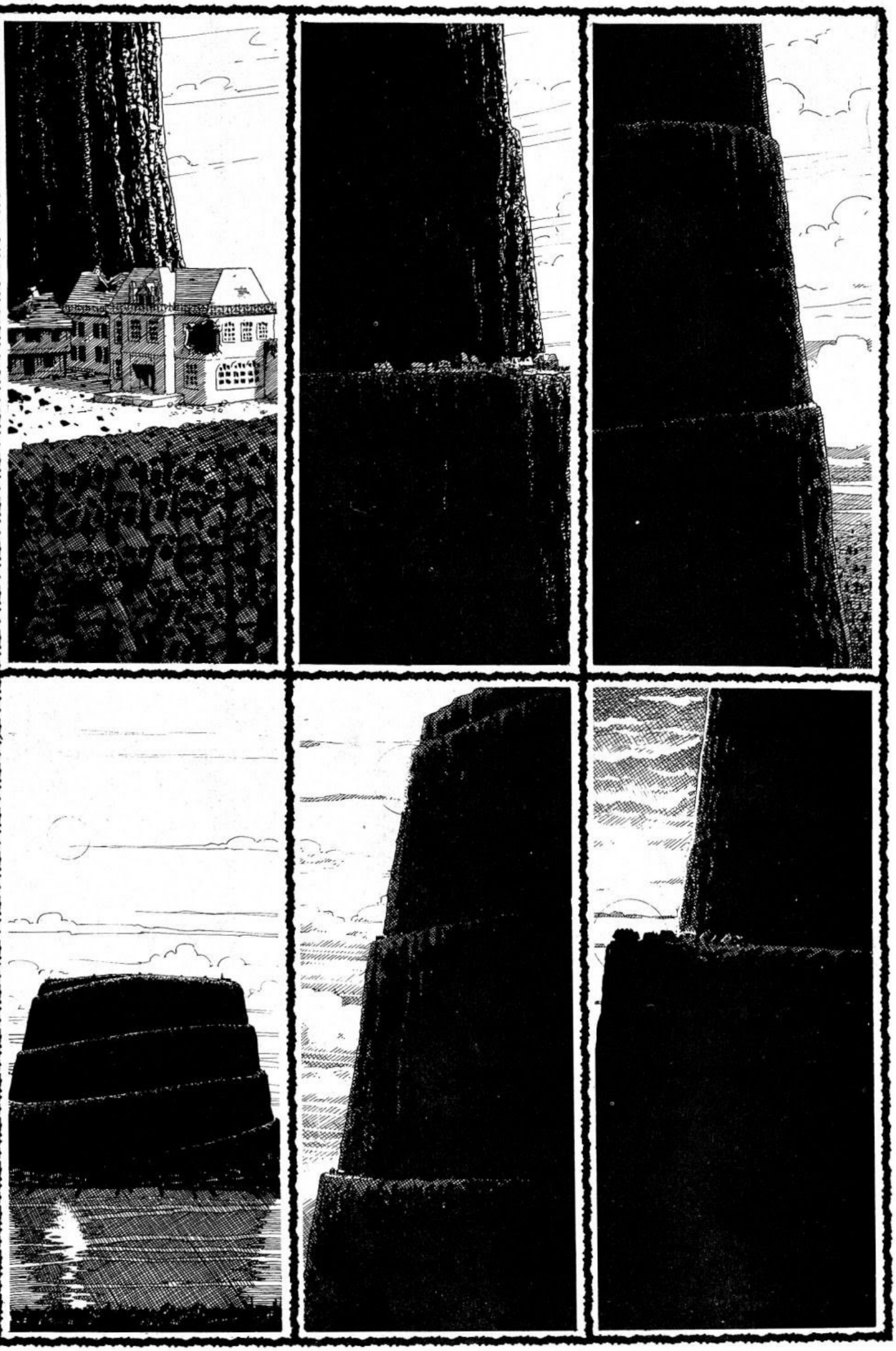

PLEP
CLANG

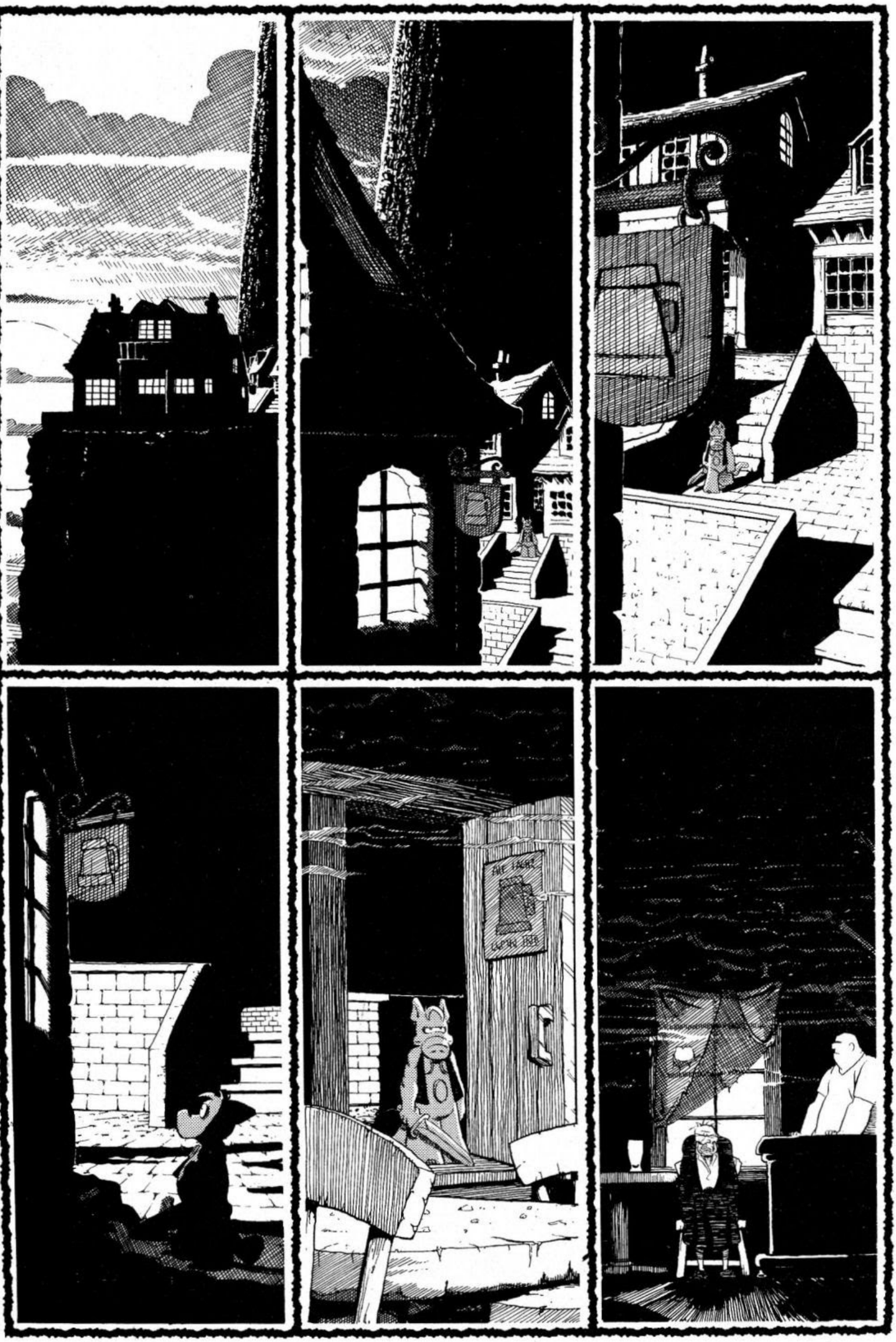


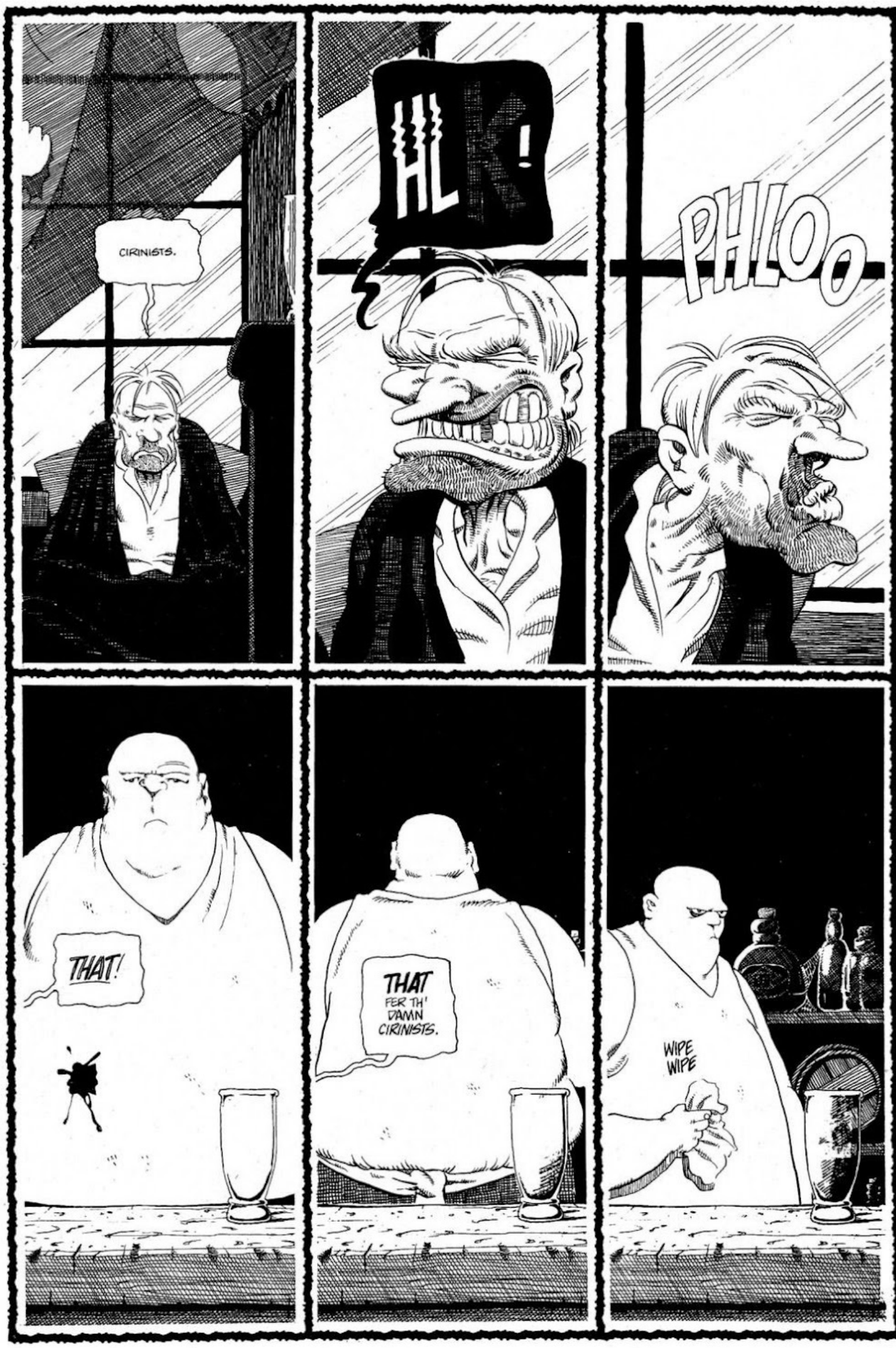


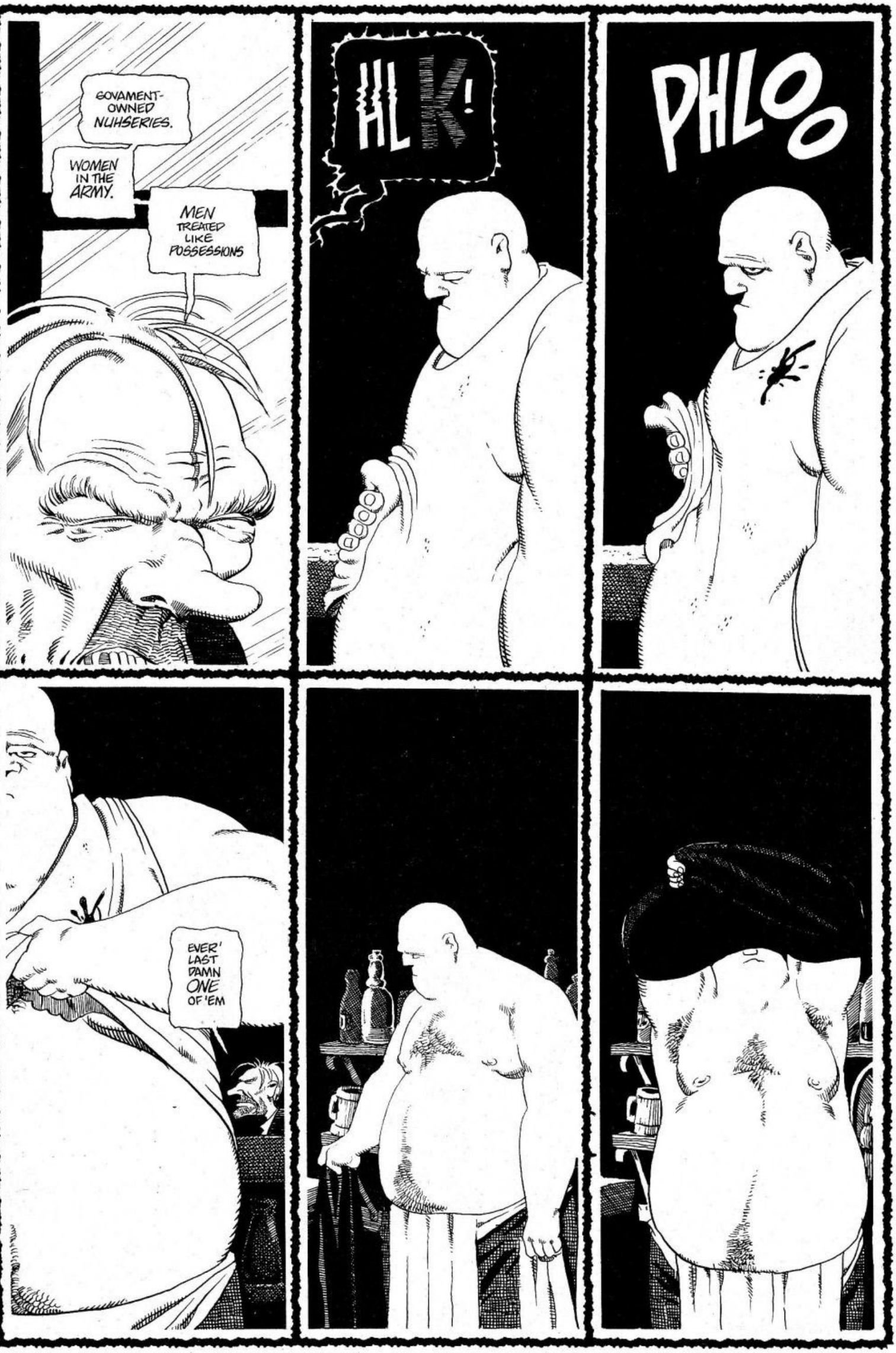

SNIXF

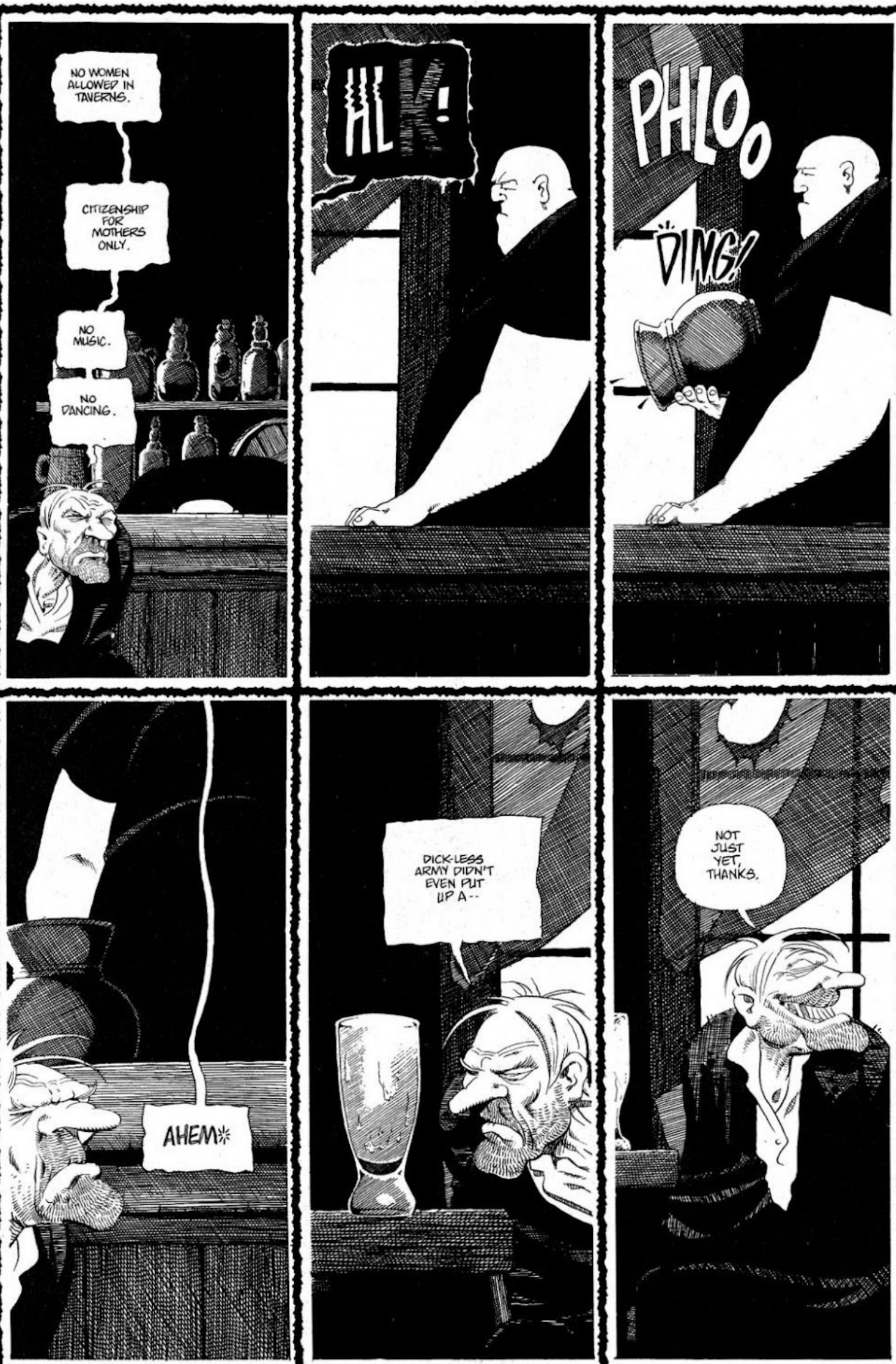


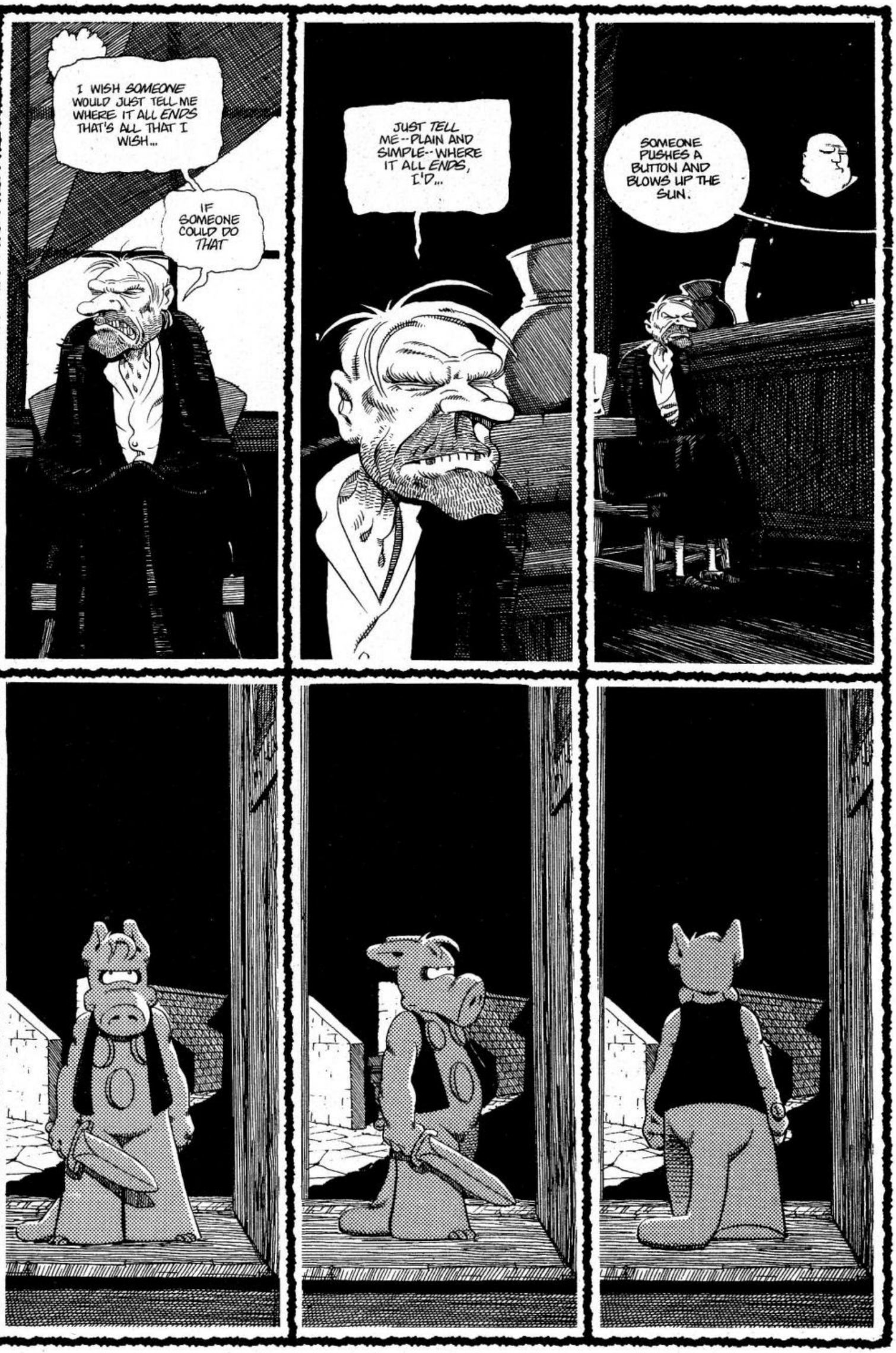


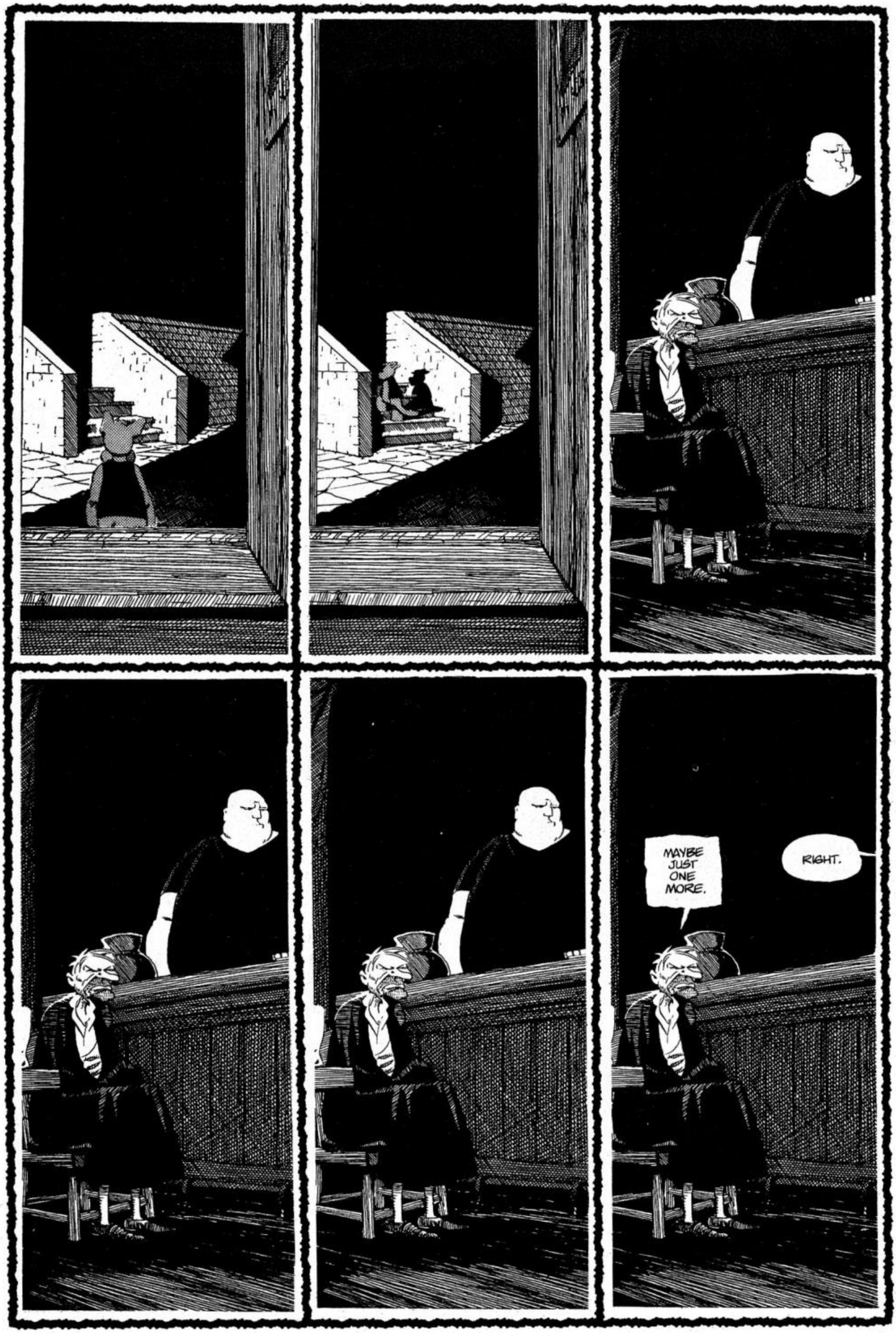



CIRINISTS.
HLK!
PHLOO
THAT!
THAT FER TH' DAMN CIRINISTS.
WIPE WIPE


GOVAMENT-OWNED NUHSERIES.
WOMEN IN THE ARMY.
MEN TREATED LIKE POSSESSIONS
HLK!
PHLOO
EVER' LAST DAMN ONE OF 'EM


NO WOMEN ALLOWED IN TAVERNS.
CITIZENSHIP FOR MOTHERS ONLY.
NO MUSIC.
NO DANCING.
HLK!
PHLOO
DING!
AHEM*
DICK-LESS ARMY DIDN'T EVEN PUT UP A--
NOT JUST YET, THANKS.


I WISH SOMEONE WOULD JUST TELL ME WHERE IT ALL ENDS THAT'S ALL THAT I WISH...
IF SOMEONE COULD DO THAT
JUST TELL ME--PLAIN AND SIMPLE--WHERE IT ALL ENDS, I'D...
SOMEONE PUSHES A BUTTON AND BLOWS UP THE SUN.


MAYBE JUST ONE MORE.
RIGHT.

Cerebus 137/138 (August/September 1990) 'LIKE-A-LOOKS'

Lord Julius again.

One of the few moments of comedy relief in Jaka's Story occurs when Oscar (based on Oscar Wilde) has a run-in with Lord Julius who, inexplicably, is wearing a dress. I quite liked that. The idea of Lord Julius in a dress attempting to flee lest in the face of the Cirinist (matriarchal fascists) invasion and take-over. In the few pages that I set aside for it, I got to have a little sport with Oscar Wilde's well-known weakness for the aristocracy (the very soul and essence of composure in the rest of the story-line, he degenerates into a fumbling, bumbling obsequious sychophant in the face of a chance meeting with the legendary Grandlord of Palnu. Naturally, Lord Julius makes short work of him. I wrote the dialogue, I know if off by heart and it still makes me chuckle when I think of it. Nice feeling) as well as doing a variety of facial expressions in the space of a handful of panels that the restrained nature of the rest of the story-line would not permit.

Of course then the mail started coming in. 'Was that the real Lord Julius?' 'What's he doing in lest?' 'How did he get there after the invasion?'.

Well, it wasn't Lord Julius. It was one of the better Like-a-looks; a concept that I had introduced towards the end of Church & State and never really had a chance to explain until now.

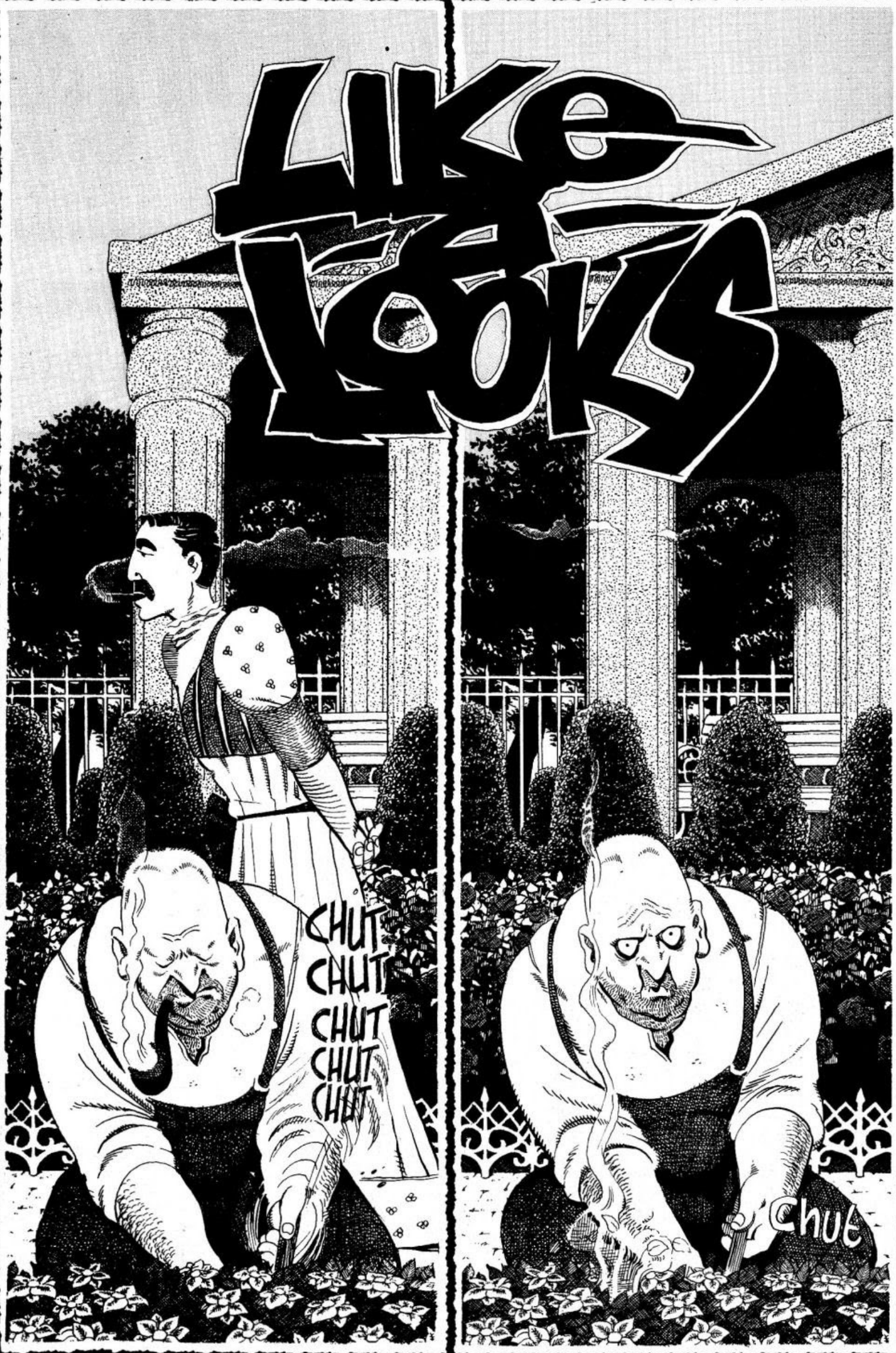
Stories have circulated since World War II that Adolf Hitler had a number of look-a-like imitators that the Nazis used for public appearances when it seemed that there was too great a chance of danger to send the real Adolf. Much of the Illuminati mythology concerns itself with the fact that General George Washington was replaced by Adam Weisshaupt some time before he was made the first President of the United States. There have even been reports that Winston Churchill and FDR did the same thing.

Altogether unlikely, but it does make a great theory. Since I have far too much time on my hands, I started thinking that that would make a very neat explanation of why the Grandlord of Palnu would have painted on eyebrows and a mustache. As can be seen from the 'mirror scene' in *Duck Soup,* anyone wearing the right clothes and having painted on eyebrows and a mustache is going to look like Groucho. What if that was Lord Julius' plan, so that he could always have a look-a-like on hand if he wanted to go away on vacation. I had even toyed with the idea of writing a story at some point in which Lord Julius is interviewing candidates for like-a-look and if they can keep up with him verbally so that by the end of the interview he can't figure out whether he or they is/are the real Lord Julius they've hired.

I found it interesting in doing this story that Lord Julius plays off of Lord Julius very well (as opposed to be problems I had with Elrod). It just becomes a series of competing realities; one-liner on top of one-liner in an on-going effort to grab the spot-light.

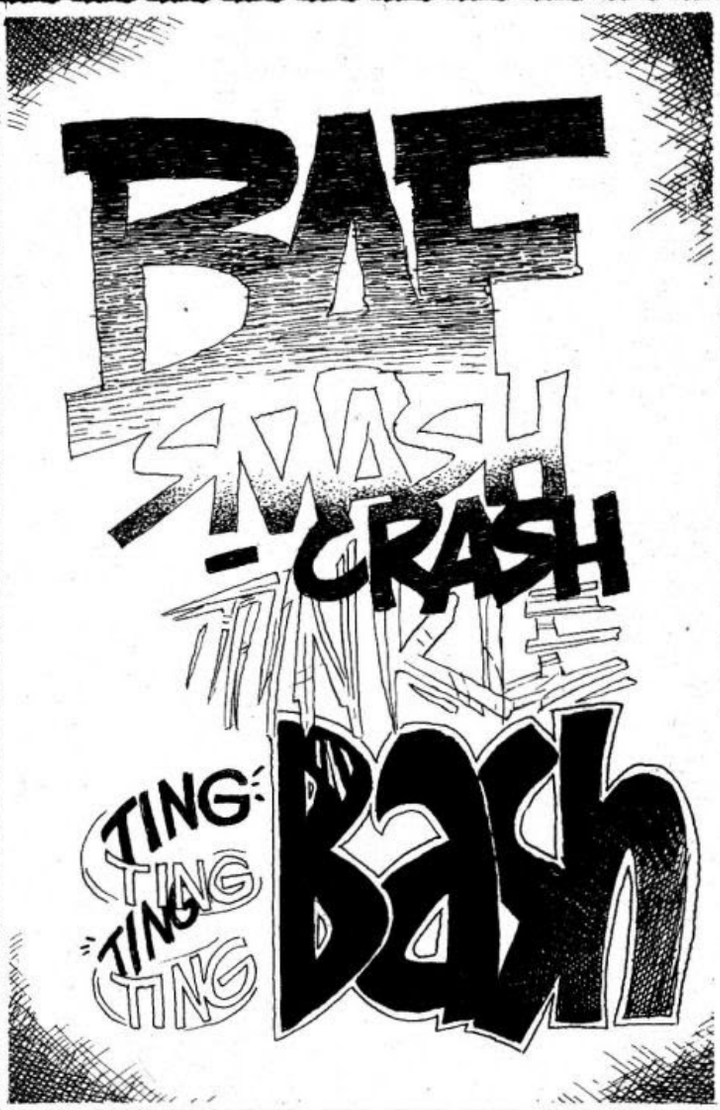
The up-shot of the whole enterprise was to show people that the Lord Julius in a dress was not the real Lord Julius. The first three letters I got on 'Like-a-Looks' all said, 'Loved the story; but why was Lord Julius wearing a dress at the beginning?'

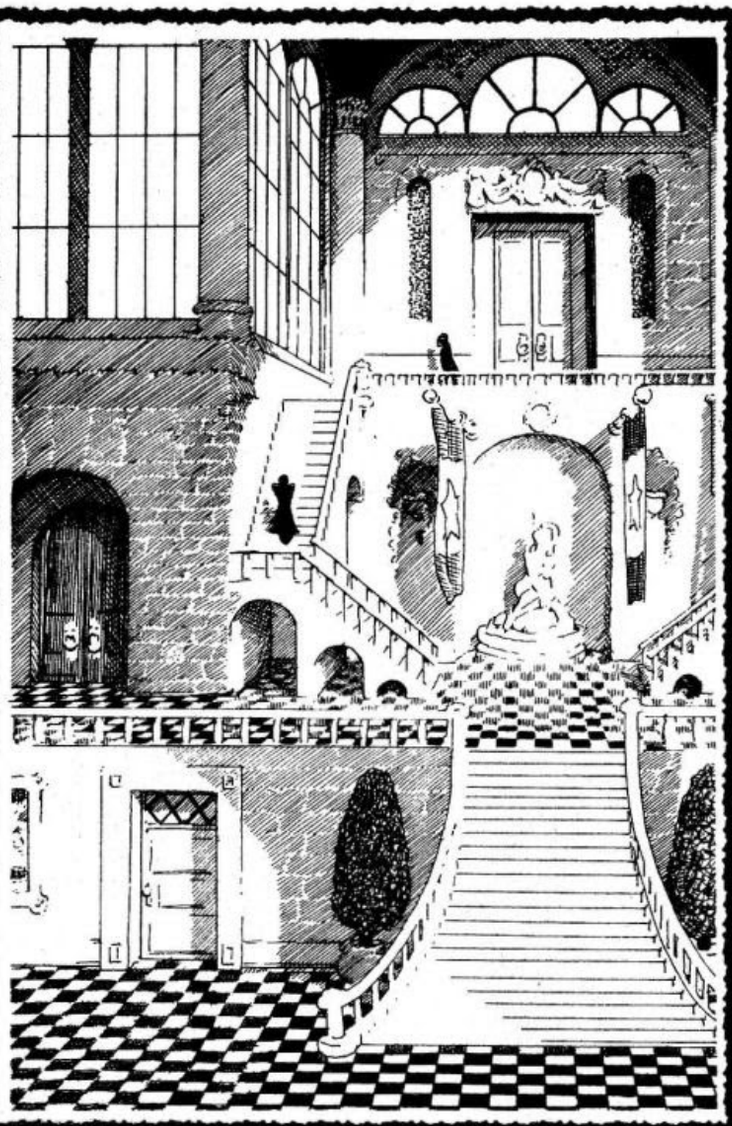
You can't win.


Like Looks
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
Chut

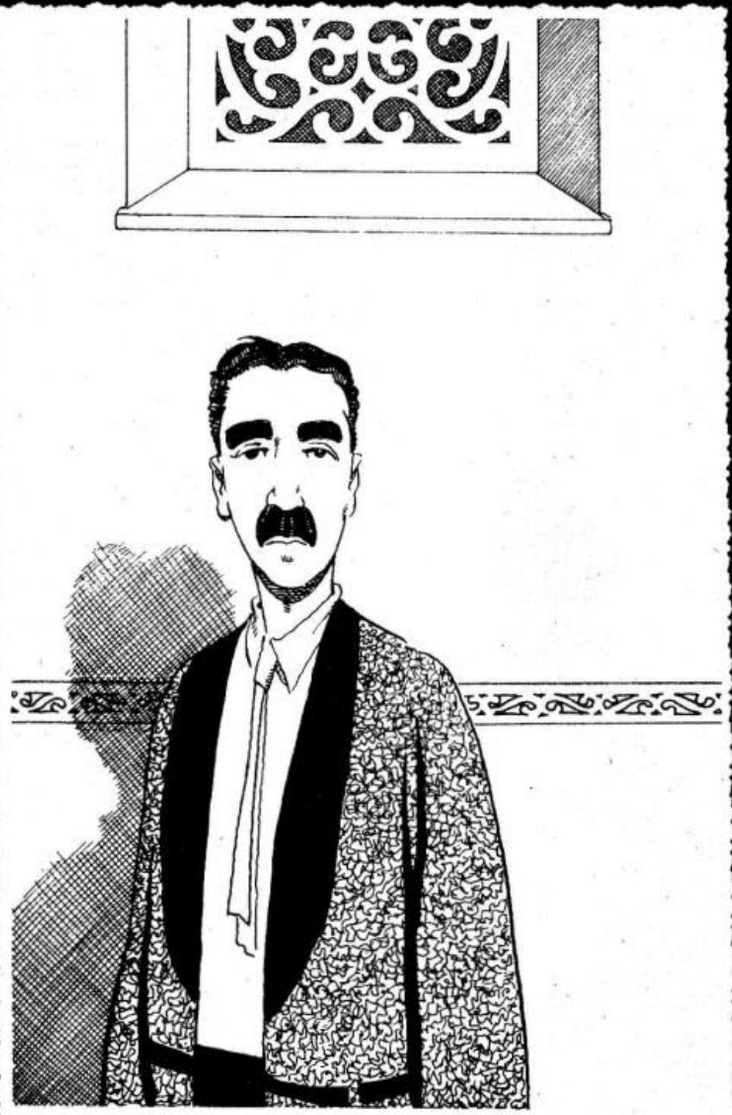
FLICK
FLICK
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK

BLUP
BLUP
GULP
BLUP
BLUP
TLNG
TLNG


BAF
SMASH
CRASH
TINKLE
TING
TING
TING
TING
Bash

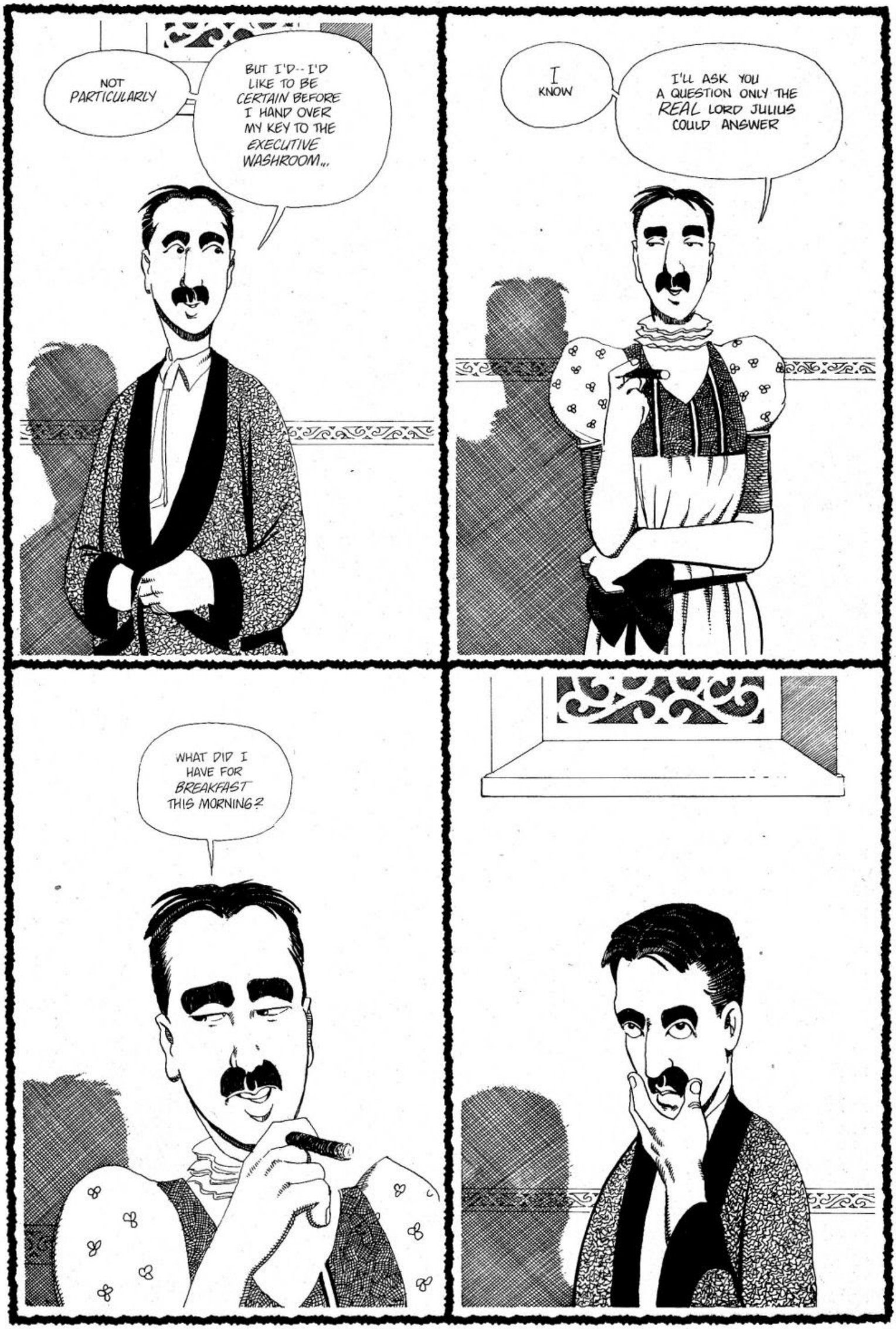


MORNING.
MORNING.



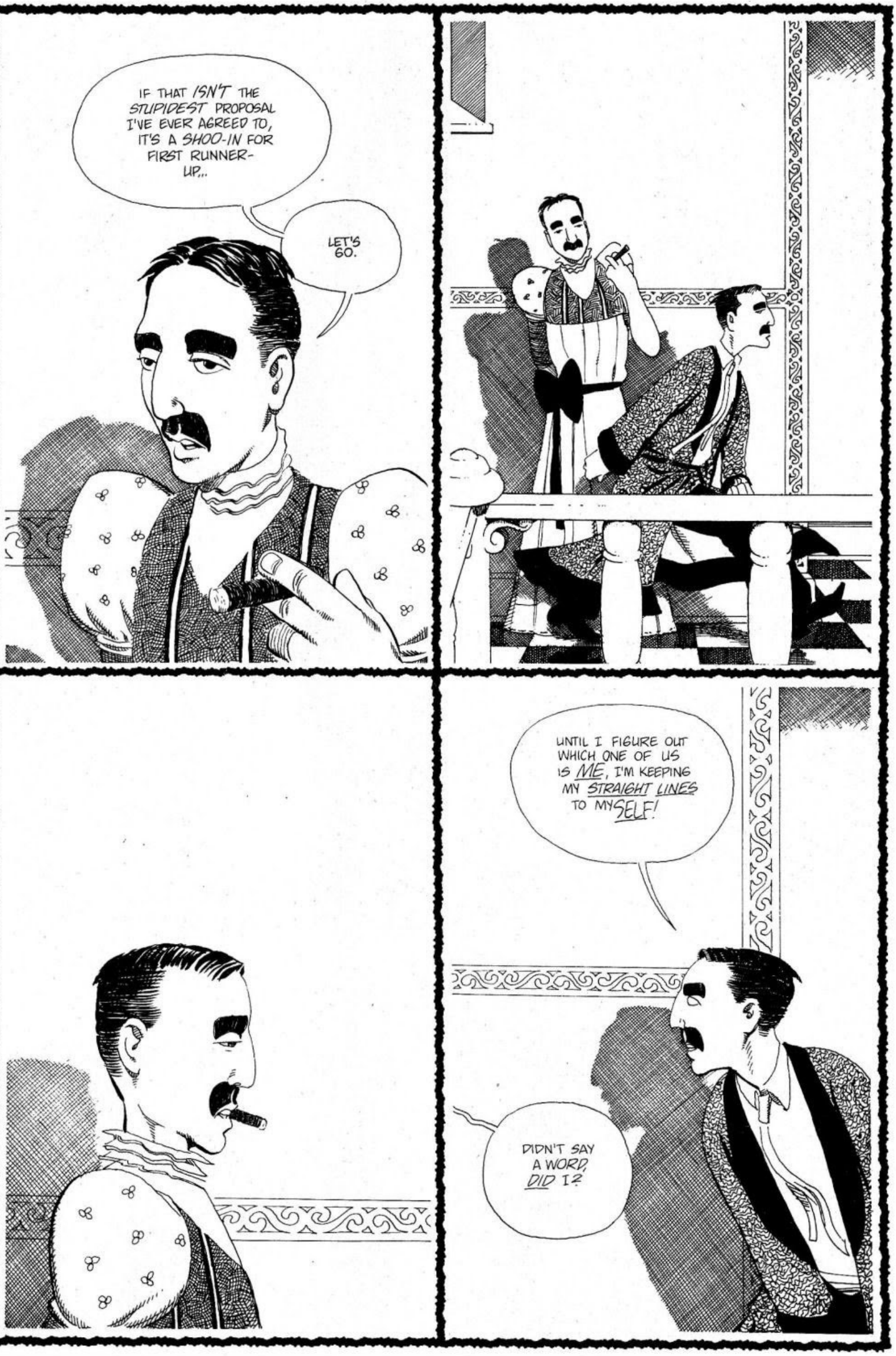
YOU KNOW IF IT WASN'T FOR THE FACT THAT I LOOK LOUSY IN CHIFFON I'D SWEAR YOU WERE ME...
IX-NAY ON THE ALKING-TAY
YOU LIKE-A-LOOKS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE SEEN AND NOT HEARD ...
LIKE-A-LOOK?
SEE HERE, MY GOOD FELLOW, DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

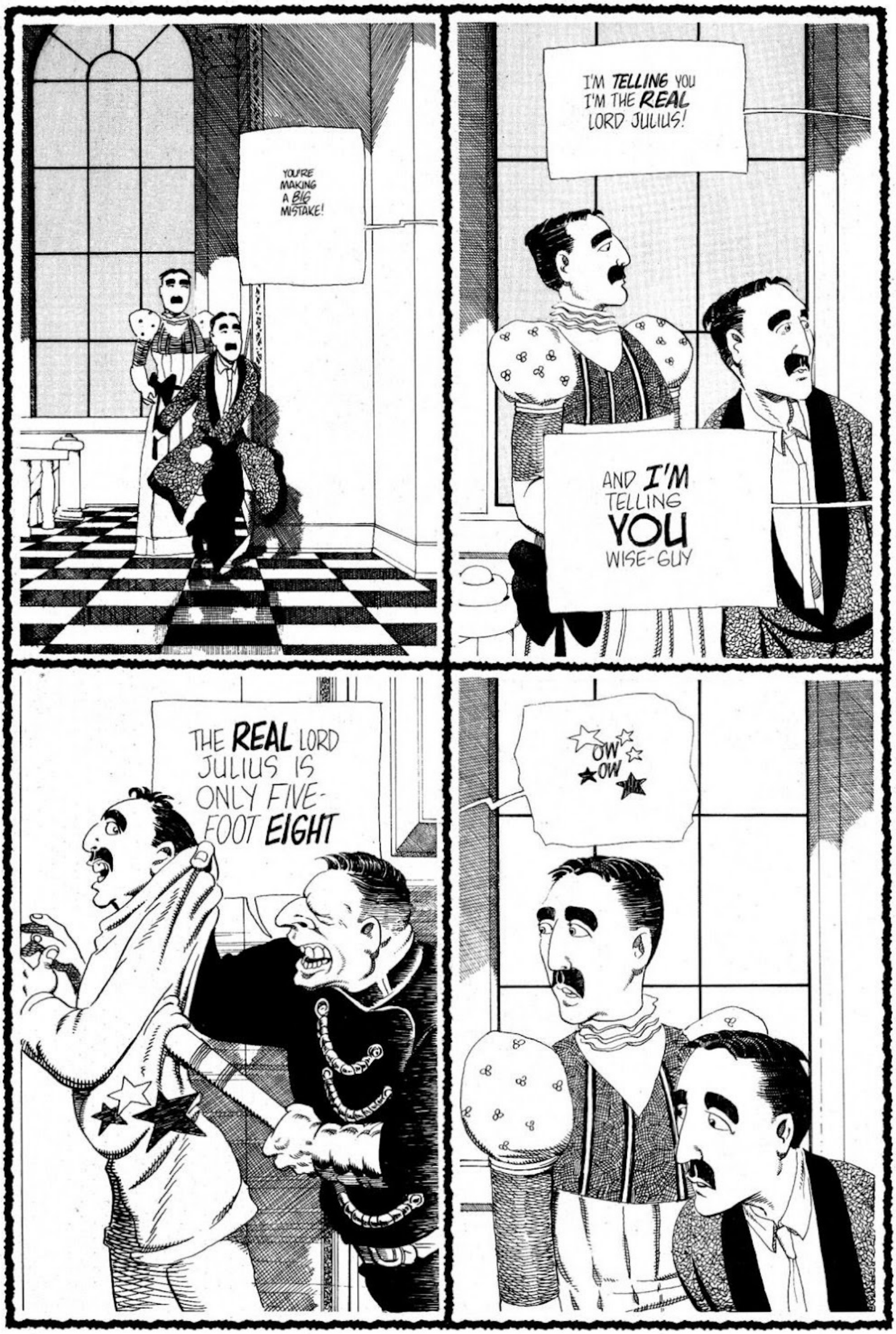
WELL JUDGING BY THE SHOE SIZE AND COMPLETE LACK OF FASHION SENSE, I'D GUESS YOU'RE PROBABLY THE LIVE BAIT SALESMAN BASKIN FOUND AT THE FLEA MARKET IN PARMOC.
YOU MEAN I'M NOT LORD JULIUS?
SURPRISED?

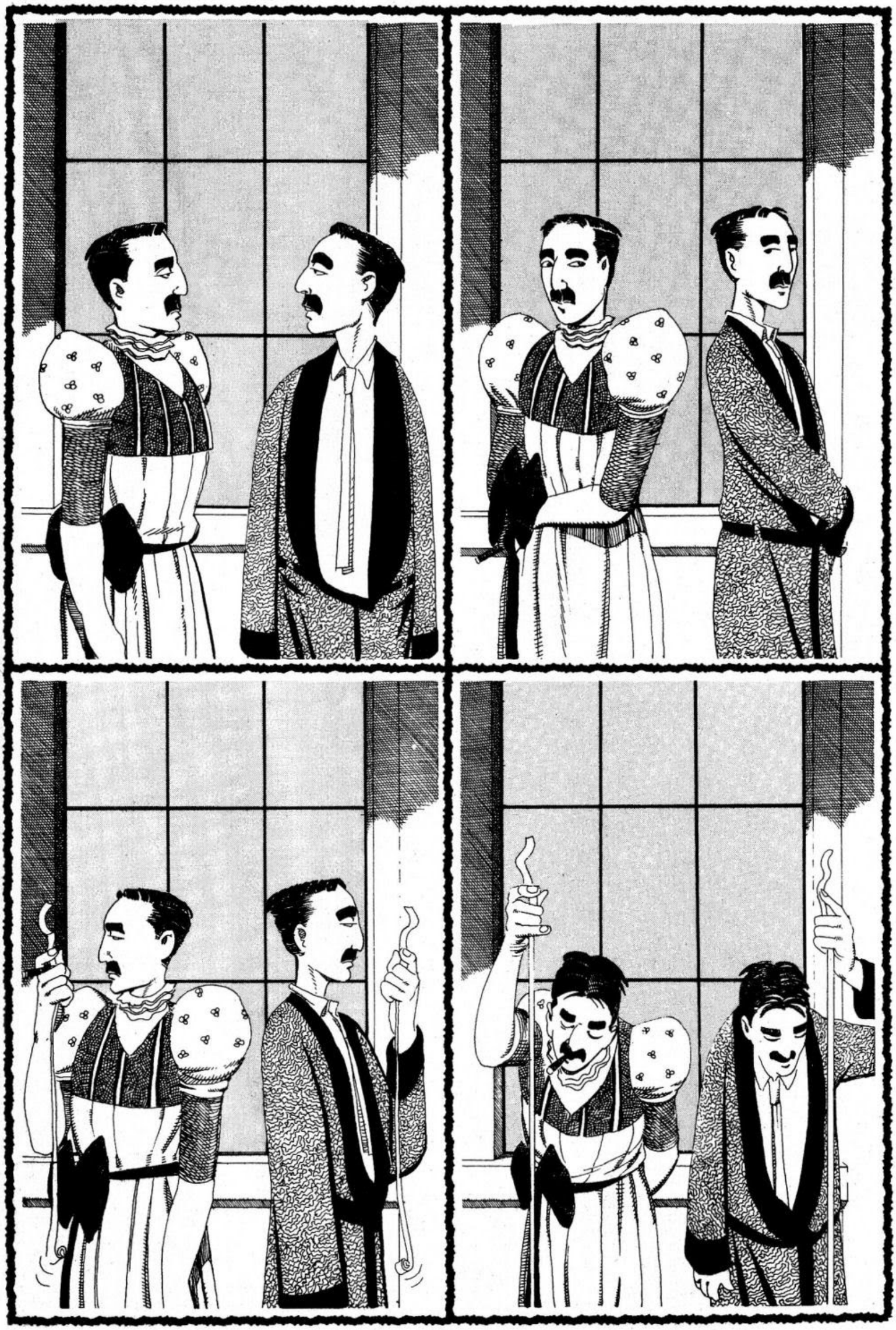

NOT PARTICULARLY
BUT I'D-- I'D LIKE TO BE CERTAIN BEFORE I HAND OVER MY KEY TO THE EXECUTIVE WASHROOM...
I KNOW
I'LL ASK YOU A QUESTION ONLY THE REAL LORD JULIUS COULD ANSWER
WHAT DID I HAVE FOR BREAKFAST THIS MORNING?

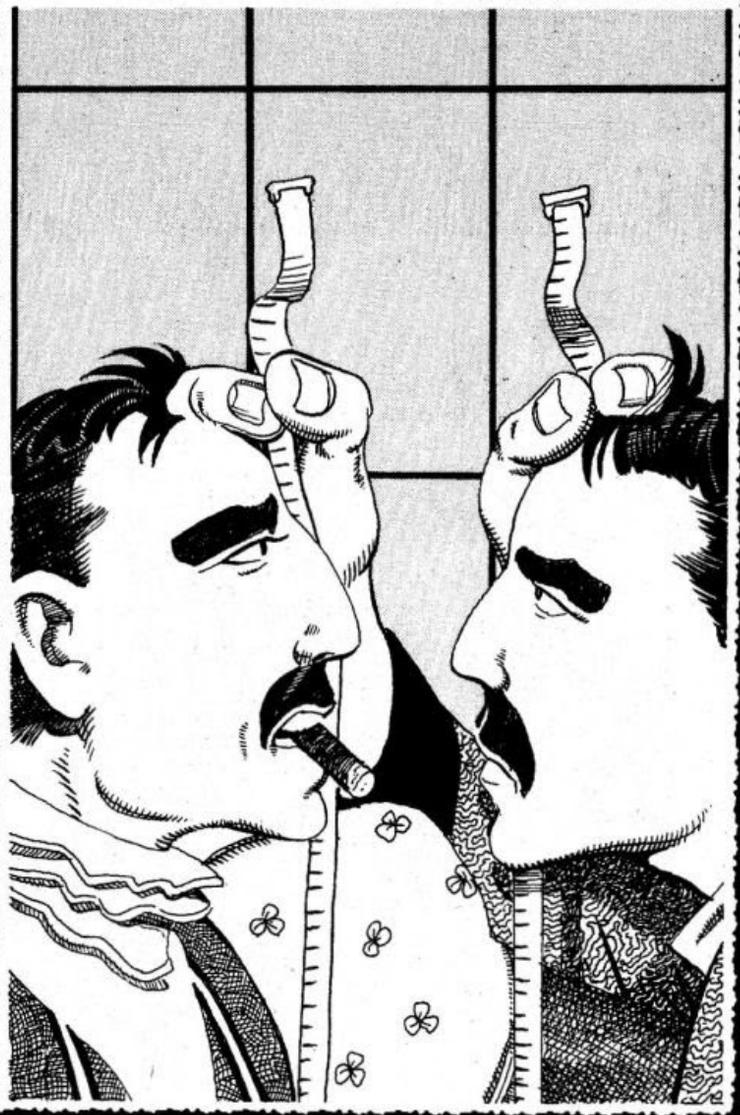
NOTHING! I NEVER EAT BREAKFAST!
WELL THAT'S THE ANSWER ALL RIGHT
SAY MAYBE YOU REALLY ARE LORD JULIUS.
AND I'M THE LIVE BAIT SALESMAN..

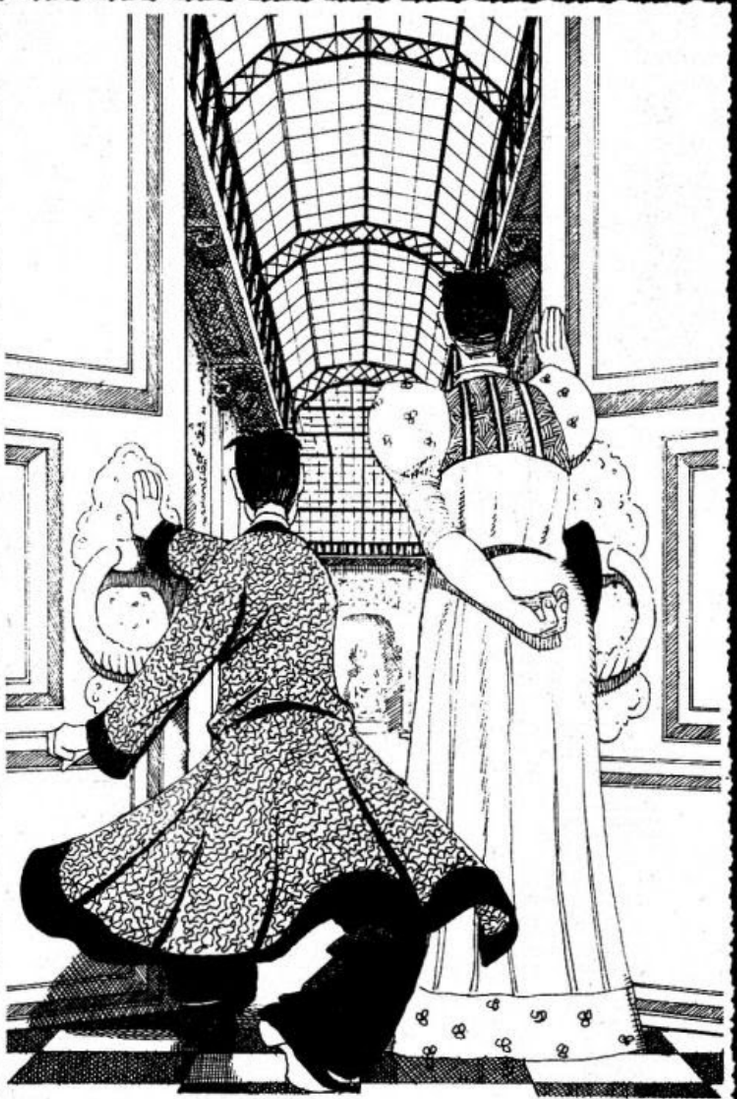
A FINE THING
WHEN YOU CAN'T TELL THE RULER OF ESTARCION'S WEALTHIEST CITY-STATE FROM A WORM MERCHANT!
...
WELL-- THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SETTLE THIS MESS
...
HOW'S THAT?
WE'LL GO TO MY OFFICE AND WHICHEVER ONE OF US BASKIN SUCKS UP TO IS THE REAL LORD JULIUS....

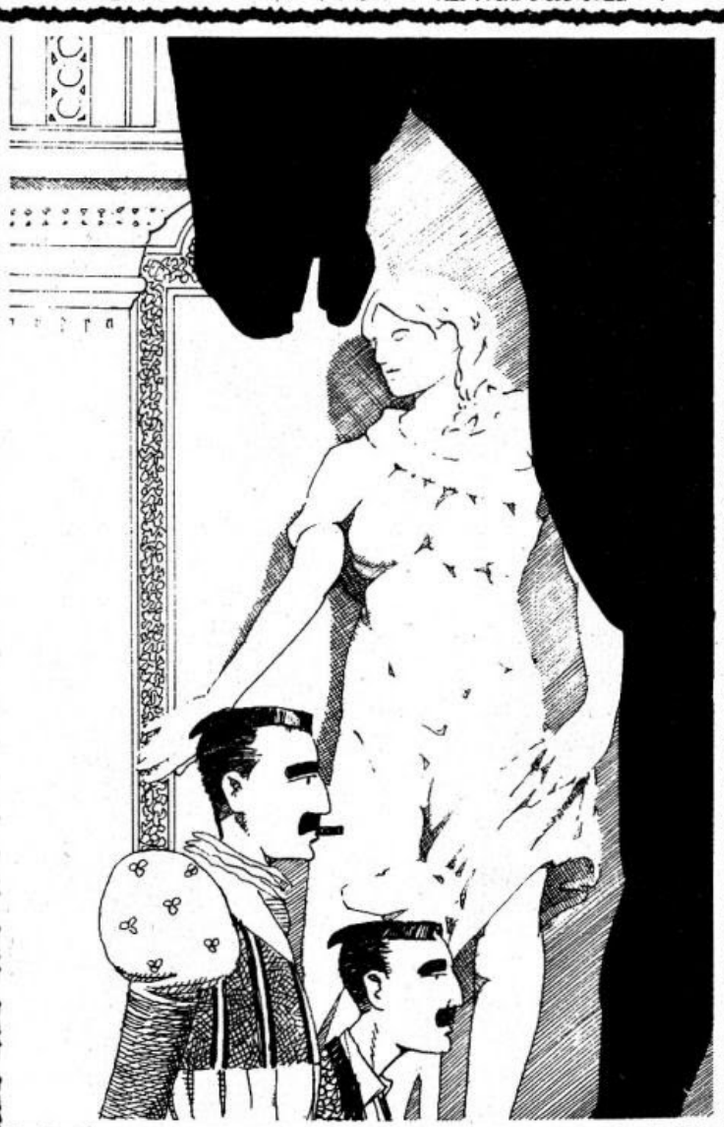

IF THAT ISN'T THE STUPIDEST PROPOSAL I'VE EVER AGREED TO, IT'S A SHOO-IN FOR FIRST RUNNER-UP...
LET'S GO.
UNTIL I FIGURE OUT WHICH ONE OF US IS ME, I'M KEEPING MY STRAIGHT LINES TO MYSELF!
DIDN'T SAY A WORD, DID I?

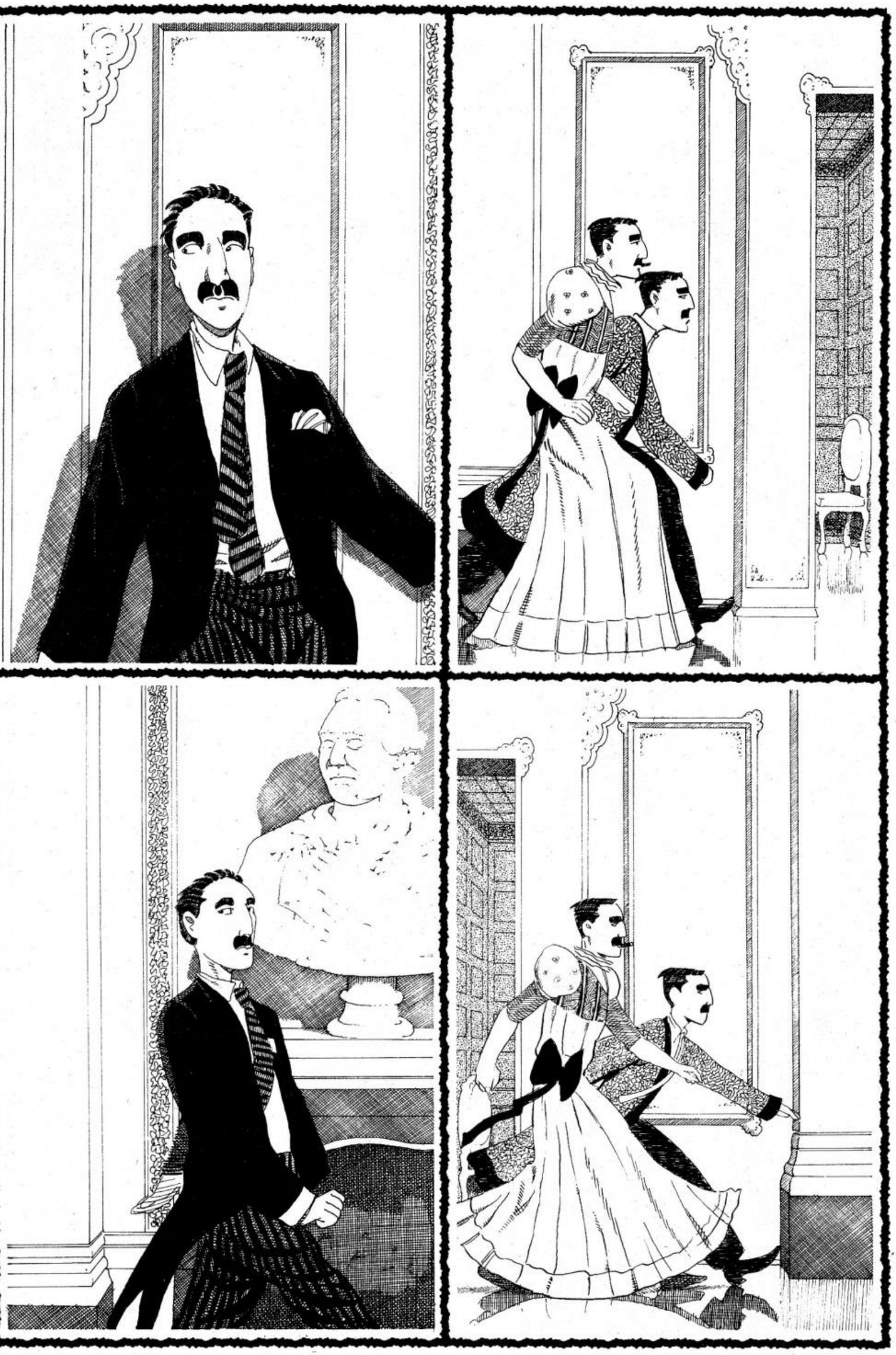

YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE!
I'M TELLING YOU I'M THE REAL LORD JULIUS!
AND I'M TELLING YOU WISE-GUY
THE REAL LORD JULIUS IS ONLY FIVE-FOOT EIGHT
OW OW

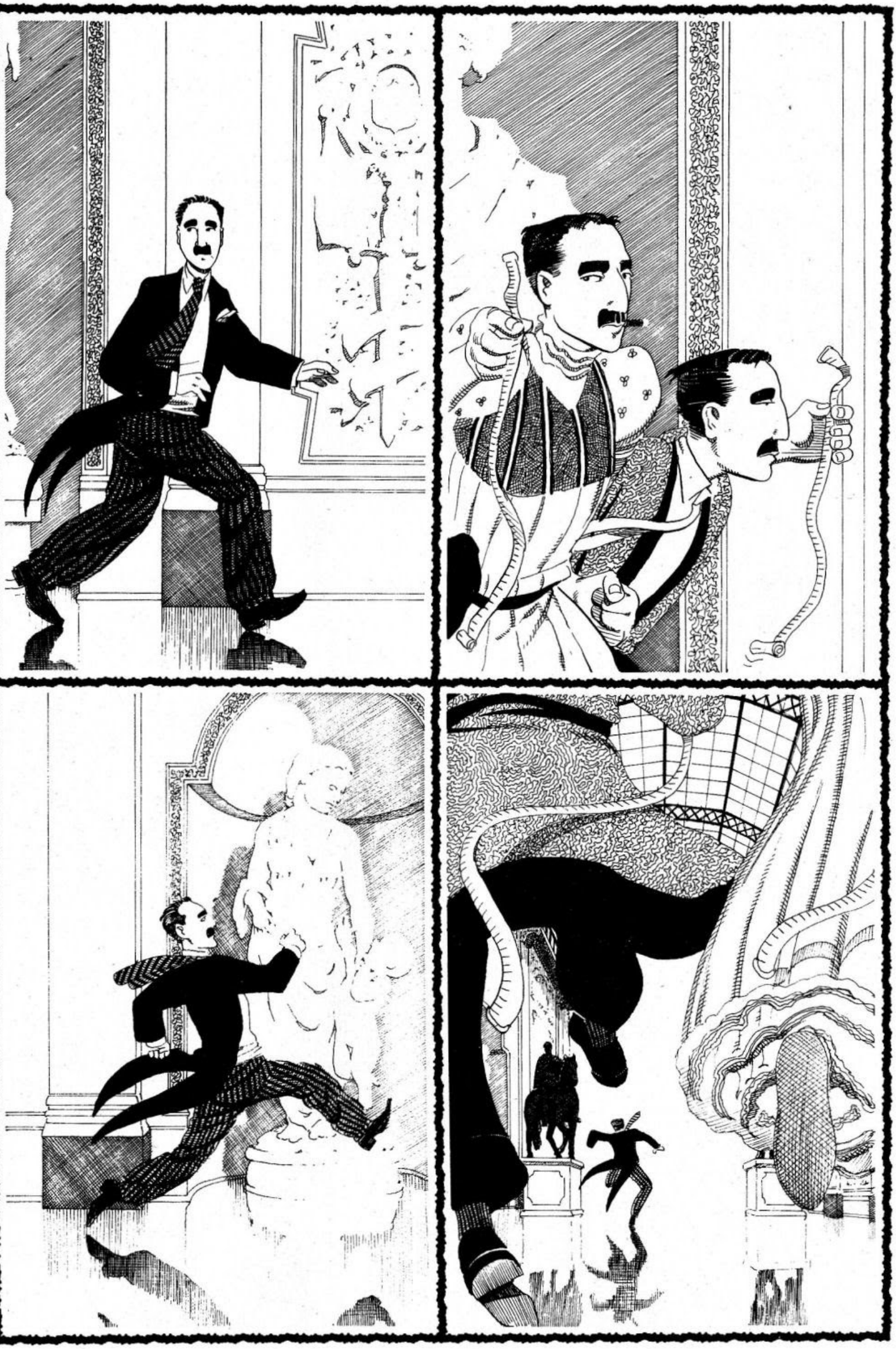


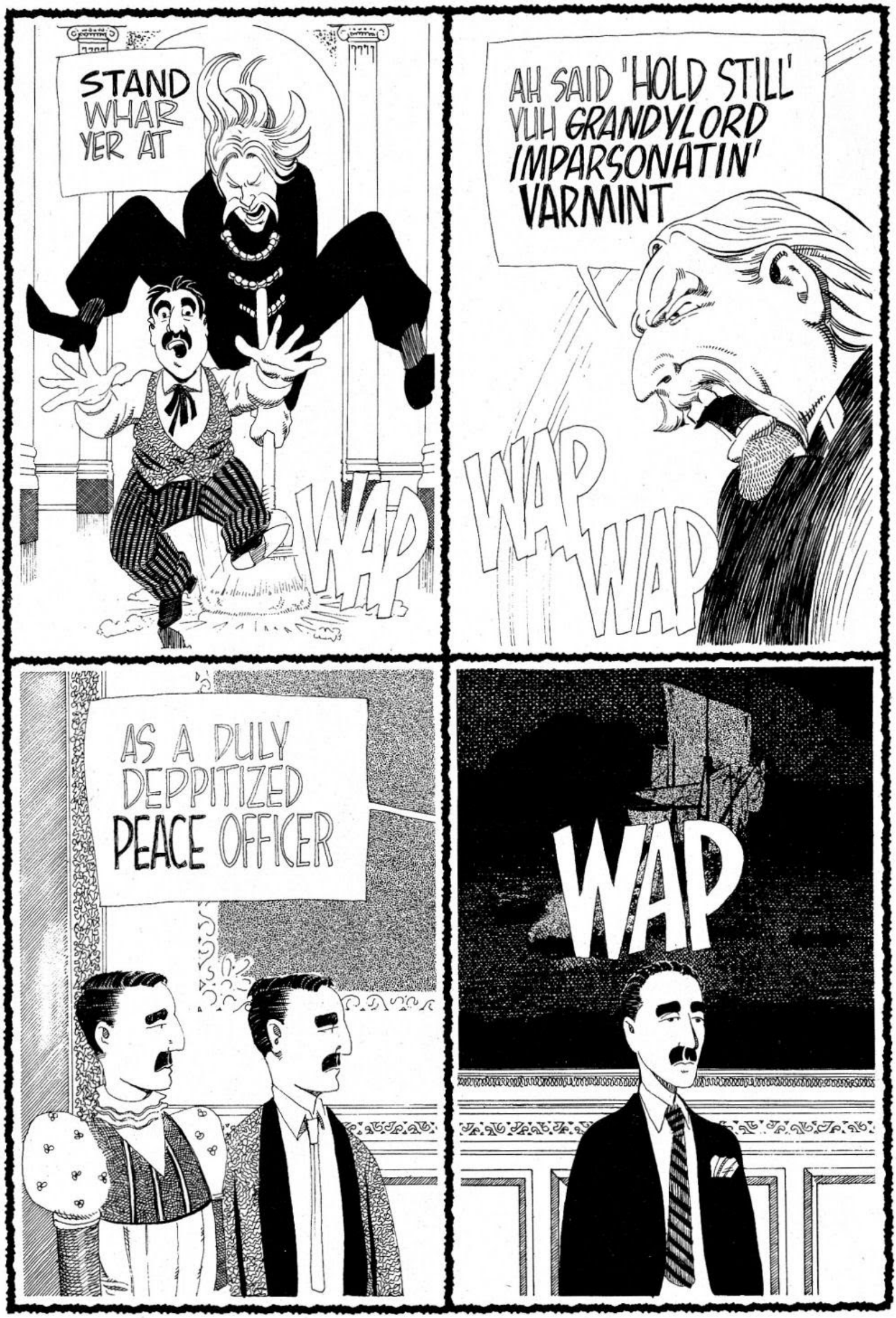


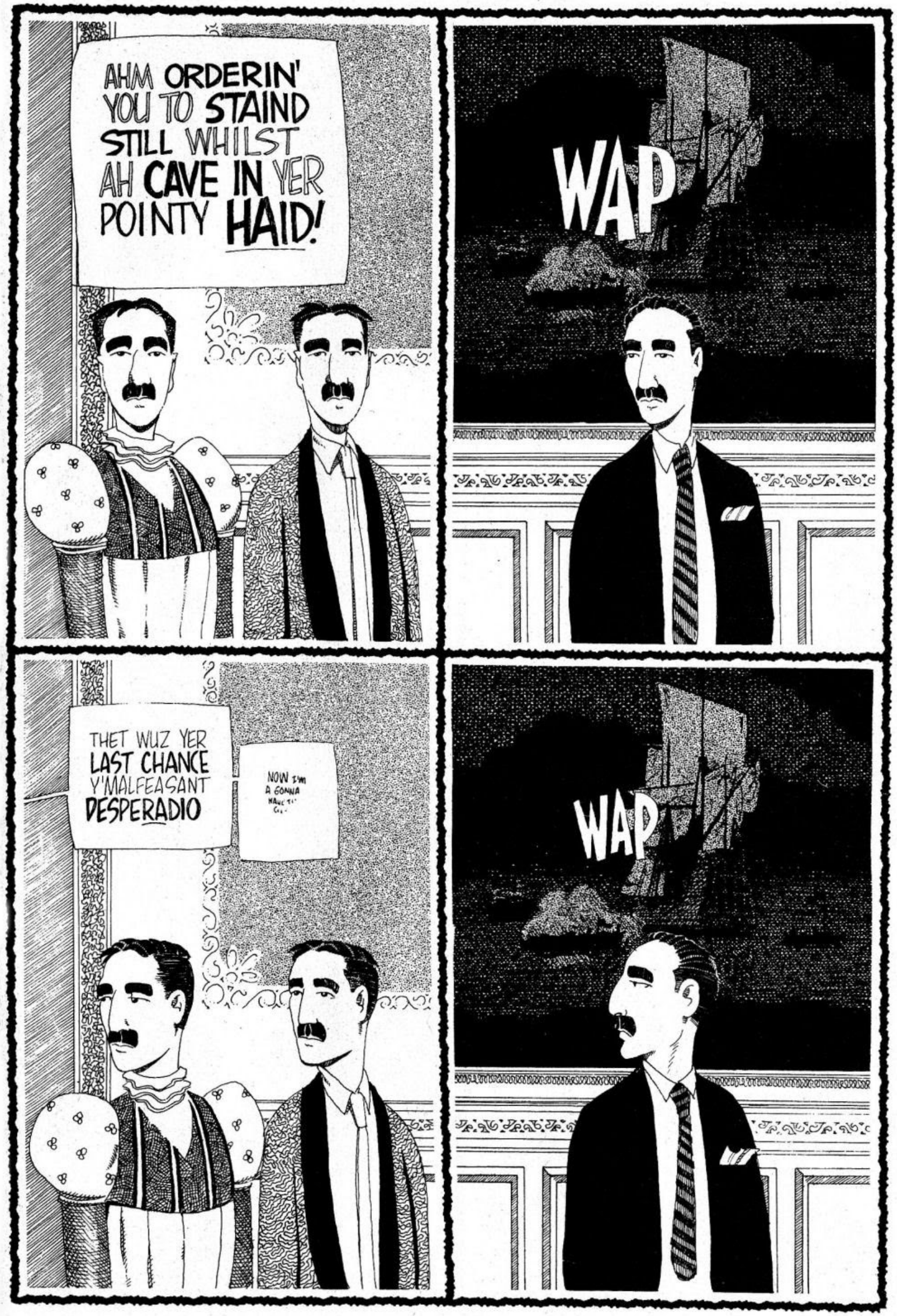


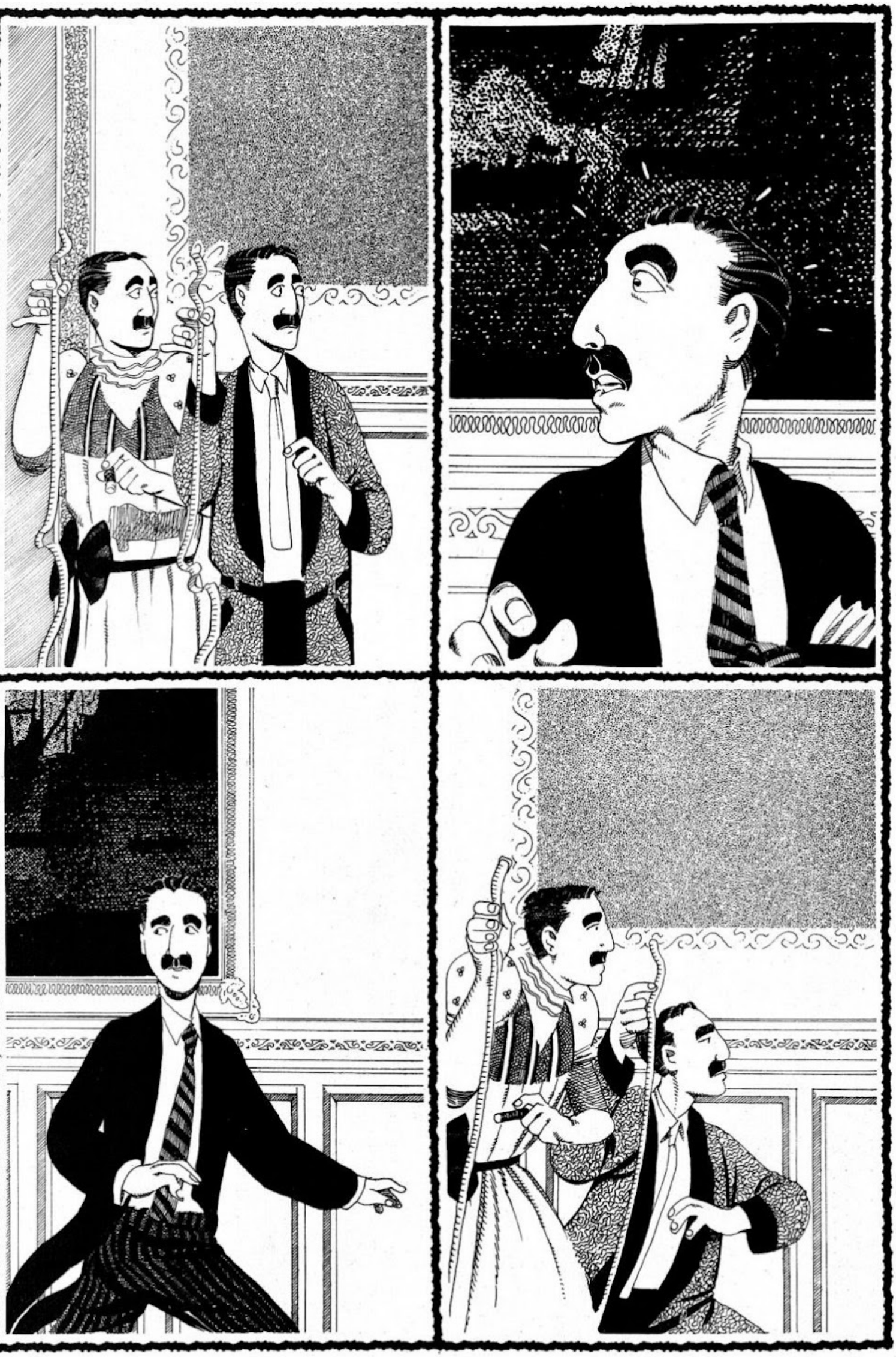







STAND WHAR YER AT
WAP
AH SAID 'HOLD STILL' YUH GRANDYLORD IMPARSONATIN' VARMINT
WAP
WAP
AS A DULY DEPPITIZED PEACE OFFICER
WAP


AHM ORDERIN' YOU TO STAIND STILL WHILST AH CAVE IN YER POINTY HAID!
WAP
THET WUZ YER LAST CHANCE Y'MALFEASANT DESPERADIO
NOW I'M A GONNA
WAP

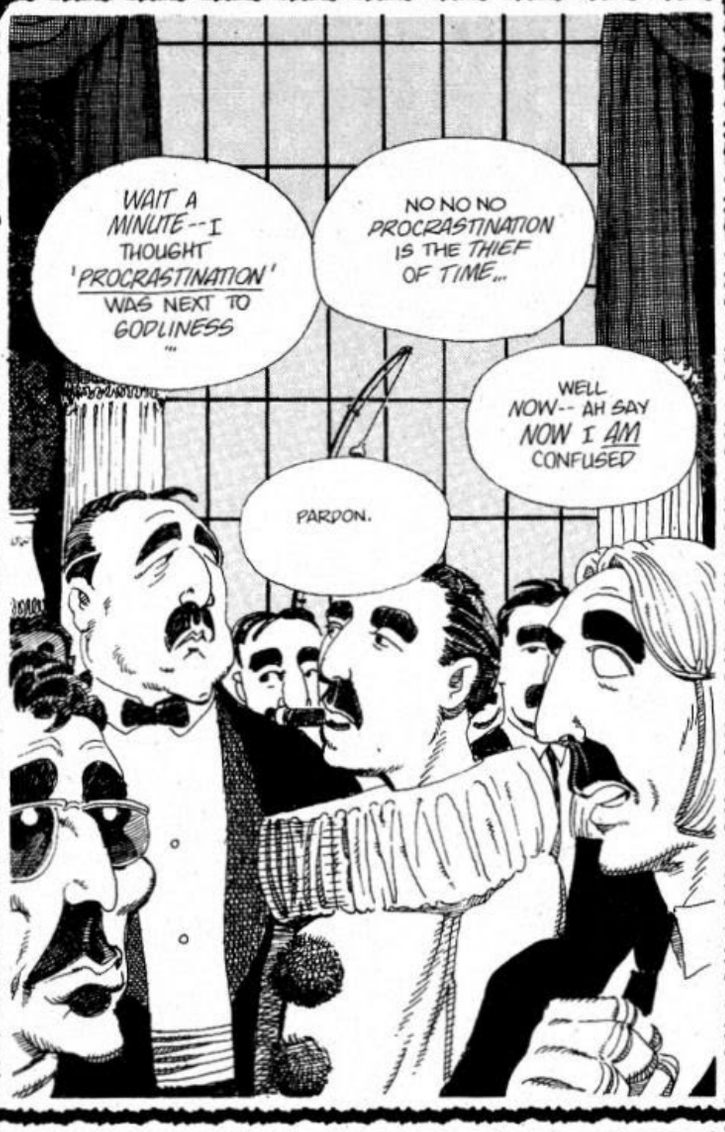


"Like-a-looks" concludes next issue.

PARDON ME
I HAVE TO GET THROUGH TO MY OFFICE
YOUR OFFICE?
YOU MEAN MY OFFICE
WHY DON'T YOU BOYS SETTLE THIS SOMEWHERE ELSE?
I HAVE SOME IMPORTANT MEETINGS I HAVE TO SLEEP THROUGH

SORRY!
EXCUSE ME BUT I SEEM TO BE STANDING ON MY FOOT ...
PARDON.
AS LONG AS WE'RE ALL STUCK HERE ANY-WAY, DOES ANYONE WANT TO BUY SOME FRESH EARTH-WORMS ?
ARE YOU SURE MY OFFICE IS UP AHEAD SOME WHERE?
MY OFFICE
YOU DON'T LOOK A BIT LIKE HIM ...
MY AUNT MIM LOOKS MORE LIKE HIM THAN YOU DO ...
THAT'S ONE OF THE MIRRORS ...
I KNEW THAT -- I WAS JUST TESTING YOU
PARDON
AND IF YOU DO TURN OUT TO BE ME?
WHY-- I'LL THROW A MONTH-LONG PARTY TO CELEBRATE...
EXCUSE ME...
MAKE IT TWO MONTHS AND YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A DEAL...
OW!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I HAD A
OW!
THUMB TRANSPLANT
KEEEP MOVING
KEEEP MOVING

THUMB TRANSPLANT?
YOU HAVE TO GIVE THEM A THUMB PRINT TO PROVE YOU'RE REALLY ME...
AND IF YOU'RE NOT THEY TAKE YOU OUT IN THE YARD AND BEAT YOU TO A PULP...
OH REALLY?
WHY DO YOU THINK WE'RE ALL JUST SORT OF MILLING AROUND OUT HERE IN THE HALL?
MOVE TOWARD THE DESK AND USING THE INK PAD AND PAPER MAKE A PRINT OF YOUR RIGHT THUMB!
REMEMBER!! REFUSAL TO GIVE A THUMB PRINT IS TANTAMOUNT TO A CONFESSION...!
I THOUGHT 'CLEANLINESS' WAS TANTAMOUNT TO A CONFESSION
NO-- 'CLEANLINESS' IS NEXT TO 'GODLINESS'

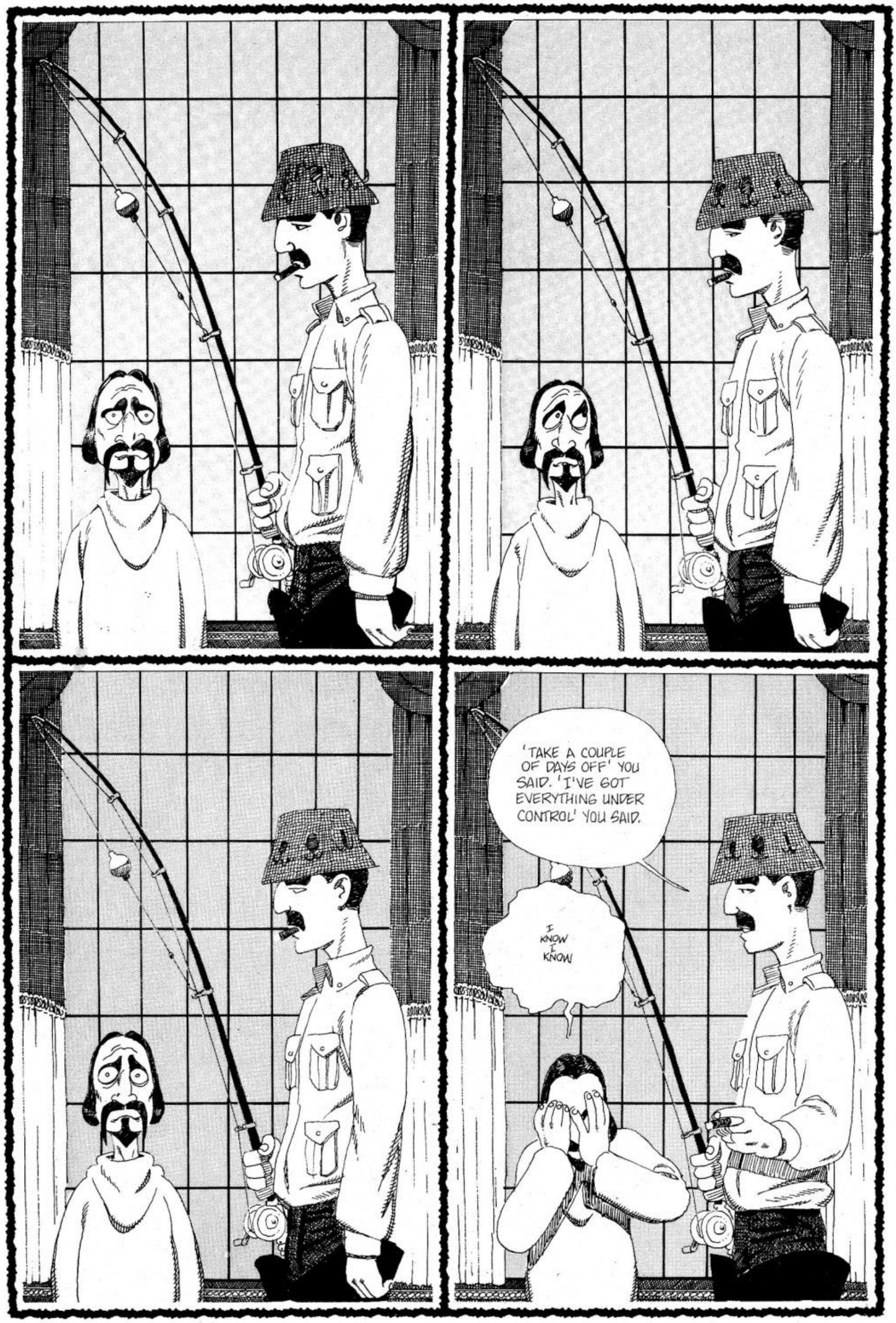

WAIT A MINUTE--I THOUGHT 'PROCRASTINATION' WAS NEXT TO GODLINESS
NO NO NO PROCRASTINATION IS THE THIEF OF TIME...
WELL NOW-- AH SAY NOW I AM CONFUSED
PARDON.

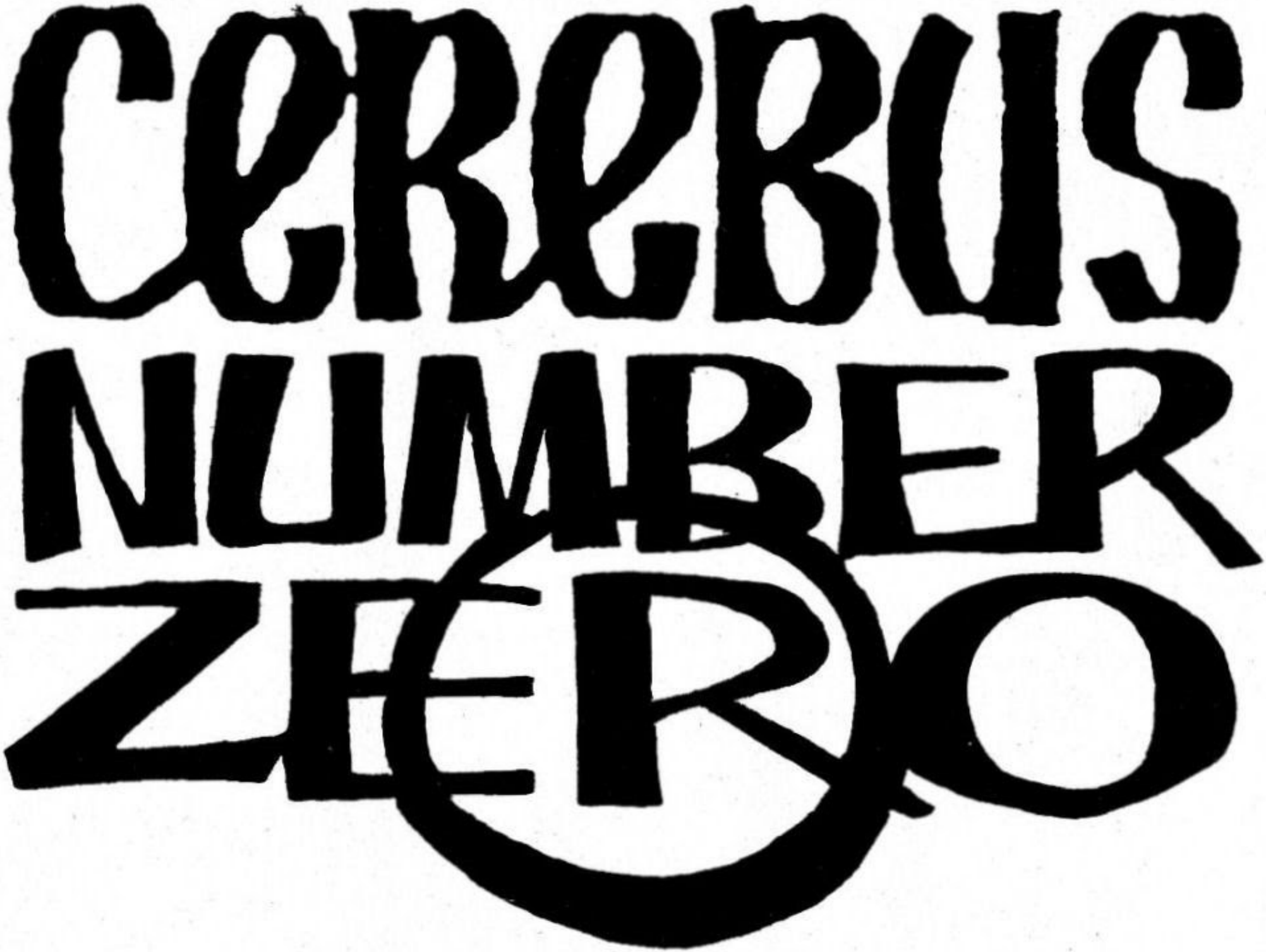
WHAT'S --AH SAY--WHAT'S 'NECESSITY' AGAIN
'NECESSITY' SHE'S THE MOTHER OF CONFESSION
I THOUGHT NECESSITY WAS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION
PARDON ME.
OR THE SECOND COUSIN OF GODLINESS

PLEASE MOVE TOWARD THE DESK AND
THAT'S NOT MY THUMB PRINT!
BUT I TOLD YOU. --I LEFT MY THUMBS IN MY OTHER JACKET...
ME TOO
MY DOCTOR TOLD ME TO KEEP MY THUMB WRAPPED SECURELY IN THIS HANDKERCHIEF
MY DOCTOR TOLD ME TO KEEP MY NECK-TIE WRAPPED AROUND MY RIGHT THUMB...
NO-- THIS ONE ISN'T IT, EITHER
LET ME TRY AGAIN-- MY THUMB WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION THE FIRST TIME

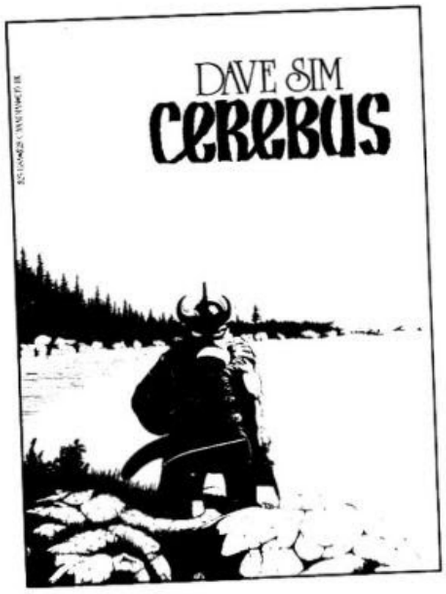
SAY! BACK OF THE LINE, THERE...
YEAH! WE AREN'T DONE BEING DECEITFUL AND EVASIVE YET
HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU
STAMP
STAMP

GUARDS! THE ONE WITH THE FISHING POLE IS HIM!
GET THE REST OF THEM OUT! OF HERE
BAF
SMA
FISHING POLE! TWENTY CROWNS NEEDS A FISHING POLE
UH-OH
PARDON
PARDON
EXCUSE ME.
SCRAMBLE FER DAYLIGHT Y' PUSSYALANNAMOUS PERTENDERS!!
WOM
AFORE I BASH YUH INTA THE MIDDLE O' NEXT Y'AR
BONK BAF
WOM
SMAK


'TAKE A COUPLE OF DAYS OFF' YOU SAID. 'I'VE GOT EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL' YOU SAID.
I KNOW I KNOW!


CEREBUS
NUMBER
ZERO

CEREBUS: THE FIRST HALF



CEREBUS reprints Cerebus 1 to 25
500 pages $25

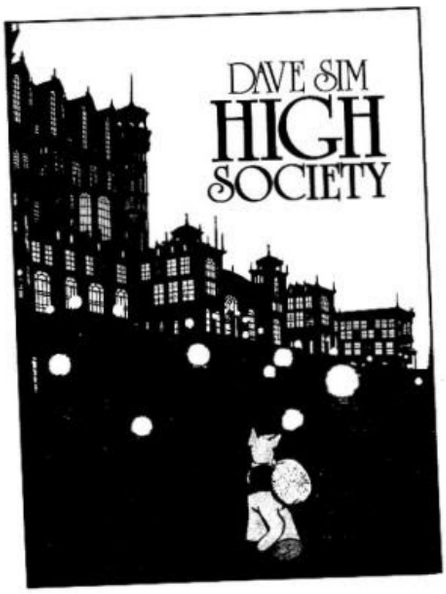
The Cerebus volume introduces the cast of characters including Elrod the Albino, Red Sophia, Jaka, the Cockroach (later Captain Cockroach with Elrod as Bunky the Albino), Lord Julius, President Weisshaupt and many more.

HIGH SOCIETY reprints Cerebus 26 to 50
500 pages $25

Cerebus gets swept up into the world of high power politics in lest and runs for Prime Minister. Introduces Astoria, Filgate, Blakely, the Regency Elf, Dirty Fleagle and his brother Dirty Drew McGrew, Duke Leonardi. The Roach becomes Moon Roach and Sergeant Preston of the Royal Mounted lestan police.

CHURCH & STATE Vol. I & II
reprints Cerebus 51 to 111
1200 pages $30 ea.

One of the longest single stories in the history of comics. Manipulated by President Weisshaupt, Cerebus finds himself married and then finds himself as Pope of the Eastern Church! Introduces Mrs. Henrot-Gutch (Cerebus' mother-in-law), Boobah, Bear, Bishop Powers, Bishop Posey, Mick and Keef and many more. The Roach becomes Wolveroach and the Secret Sacred Wars Roach. Also, in volume II, is the Flaming Carrot cross-over.



JAKA'S STORY reprints Cerebus 114 to 136
500 pages $25

Cerebus returns to find his life in ruins and ends up as a houseguest of the love of his life, Jaka, and her new husband Rick. Introduces Oscar the poet, Pud, the tavern-owner, and Mrs. Thatcher.

MELMOTH reprints Cerebus 139 to 150
250 pages $17

Cerebus, mistakenly believing that Jaka is dead, takes up residence in Dino's Cafe, clutching Jaka's childhood doll, Missy and his sword. The other half of the story is a faithful retelling of the last days of Oscar Wilde. The Roach becomes normalroach. Introduces Doris, Dino, Janice, Robbie and Reggie. Cameo appearances by Mick and Keef.

THE SECOND HALF BEGINS IN 1993:

FLIGHT reprinting Cerebus 151 to 162
250 pages ($17)

and

CEREBUS NUMBER ZERO
(reprinting the 'in-between' stories from Cerebus 51, 112/113 and 137-138) ($2.25)

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